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*Powell Lectures on Philosophy
at Indiana University*

DANIEL S. ROBINSON, EDITOR

FIRST SERIES

THE LASTING ELEMENTS OF
INDIVIDUALISM

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THE
LASTING ELEMENTS OF
INDIVIDUALISM

BY
WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING

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THE
MAHLON POWELL FOUNDATION

MAHLON POWELL—1842—1928

WABASH, INDIANA

*Extract from the last Will and Testament of
Mahlon Powell:*

Having entertained a desire for many years to assist in the cause of a higher education for the young men and women of our state and nation, and to that end provide a fund to be held in trust for the same, and to select a proper school or university where the same would continue in perpetuity, I will, devise and bequeath all of the real and personal property that I possess and of which I die seized to the Trustees of Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, to be held by them and their successors in office forever, the *Income* only to be used and applied in the support and maintenance of a *Chair in Philosophy* in said institution, and to be dedicated and forever known as "The Mahlon Powell Professorship in Philosophy" of said University.

In accordance with the provisions of this bequest, the Trustees of Indiana University have established a Chair in Philosophy on The Mahlon Powell Foundation. Each year a Visiting Professor will be invited to fill this Chair. The first lecturer on The Mahlon Powell Foundation is Professor William Ernest Hocking of Harvard University.

WILLIAM LOWE BRYAN

To

JOHN DEWEY

*Comrade and opponent in debate
through many years of
deepening affection*

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PREFACE

IN a world where all things change there is a certain temerity in speaking of "the lasting elements" of anything. Especially in human affairs—and Individualism is no doubt a human affair—motion and novelty are the very stuff of life, and experiment is the method of intelligent living.

Yet there is nothing more absurd than to make a party issue between change and stability, each of which requires the other for its very definition. Thus "experiment," which has become in recent years a sort of badge for the party of transition,—experiment has an intention, namely, to establish something. And if what is established does not stay established experiment loses its point. Human history, as men try with growing consciousness to direct their living, acquires by degrees an experimental character; and even though we mortals learn from experience with extreme slowness, history is something better than a wish-wash of experimental gropings which establish *nothing*! History in its texture *is* change; but because of this it *reveals* what is permanent.

One reason why we are so slow about seeing what history "shows" is that history does no talking. The question of what history has to say, or of what we shall learn from it, is not

answered by a simple "look at the facts," as if history were a well-indexed set of official records. History is no set of books, but an unsurveyable multitude of human occurrences, forming themselves into indistinct processions and tides about the flimsy shapes of emergent proffers-of-guidance called "ideas." In this infinite clash and milling of events, unless one is guided by some insight into human nature (and the very term, human nature, implies that there is a core of stability in man's make-up) he has no clue to what is happening, literally no clue. This is the trouble with much recorded history, an assemblage of very true facts, devoid of meaning. Given such an insight into human nature, history may begin to tell a tale, coherent, consecutive, and even with a certain eventual necessity in it. Some things, one sees, are bound to last, not in the sense that they never flicker, but in the sense that whatever their variable fortunes, they are bound to reassert themselves, because they have a kind of validity which human civilization cannot let go. In our traditional Individualism there are various temporary trappings, due to earlier times and the tasks then in hand; but there are also permanent validities, and there are few things better worth while than to try to grasp them.

This book, then, is a study in the philosophy of history—looking forward! It is hostile not to pragmatism, but to mere pragmatism: it be-

lieves that our experimentalism is destined to transform itself into a version of the "dialectic method" whereby mere groping takes on a rational direction and destination. *Out of the flux, certainty.*

The particular shape of the argument had its beginnings in a three-cornered symposium on "The Future of Liberalism" held in New York in the winter of 1934-35. The American Philosophical Association had invited Professors John Dewey and C. E. Montague and me to discuss this subject in one another's presence. With such colleagues, the occasion could not fail to be instructive to me, and I hoped for an opportunity to work certain phases of the matter out with greater thoroughness. This opportunity came with the invitation to give the first series of Mahlon Powell Lectures at the University of Indiana, during the spring of 1936. The four lectures there given have turned into five chapters, and were prevented only by heroic self-restraint from growing into more! The student is always for expanding his theme, and for defending himself against a swarm of critics actual and imaginary. It is well for patient mankind that he is not always allowed this scope, but is called on to say what he has to say in brief, even dogmatic, terms, leaving the elaboration of his arguments to other occasions.

I must end with a grateful word of praise to the University of Indiana, especially to its

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President, Dr. W. L. Bryan, to my friend and colleague Dr. D. S. Robinson, to Mr. Hugh McKennan Landon, and to Brown County, for the kindness, the hospitality, and the beauty with which they sustained the engaging experience of giving these lectures.

WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING

Cambridge, Mass., January 20, 1937.

THE LASTING ELEMENTS OF INDIVIDUALISM

CHAPTER I

THE INDIVIDUAL AS UNIT OF SOCIAL ORDER

I JOIN with you most heartily in honoring the memory and the deed of this farmer citizen of Indiana, Mahlon Powell. Men whose lives are given to practical affairs, and whom we sometimes refer to as "men of action," often realize better than our theorists that the so-called practical problems of society turn on problems of thought, and that the plainest issues of daily life carry with them the whole of our philosophy. Because this is true, the honor of opening this Lectureship brings me mingled feelings of pleasure and of dismay. Pleasure in the auspicious occasion, and in the warmth of your greeting. Dismay, as I consider the responsibility and the magnitude of the task I have undertaken.

Our theme is the meaning and the prospects of individualism. This word individualism is a common word; it signifies a principle which has entered deep into American life; it has long historic roots. On each of these

counts, it is a theme of uncommon difficulty. Because it is much on our tongues, it resists a fresh look; its edges, like an old coin, have been worn smooth. Like most common words, it has taken on a variety of meanings; and like most words of abstract principle, it is slippery. Further, it has a special place in our sentiments, so that severe analysis is not easy, especially in view of the controversies that now swirl around it.

One consideration tends to reassure us, namely, that each of us is an individual. For this reason, the chief data for our thought are to be found close at home. The question is our question: What do we mean by individualism? How much of it is of lasting value? Is it perhaps a pioneer notion, suitable for the period of nation building, when the stern competition of rugged men with nature and with each other was the best way to bring out those qualities of strength and self-help which have established the frame of the nation? Is it now time to reconsider and modify our allegiance to this ideal, for we are told by the pragmatic philosophy that all notions of this abstract sort are simply tools for achieving results, and are therefore relative to their own epochs? Or is there something about the duty of being an individual and acting like an individual

which is permanently valid? These questions, I say, touch every one of us near at home, and the materials for an answer are not far from any one of us.

On this account, we may refrain from entering into the infinite thicket of contemporary discussion; we may use that discussion just so far as it is helpful to our own thought. Likewise we may treat history as our servant, not as our master, dipping into it here and there where we find it useful, but making no point of retracing in detail the history of our idea. We may remember the admirable perspective of the English newspaper which announced to its readers: "A great storm is raging on the Channel. The Continent is completely isolated." We are much concerned with the existing storm, and its occasions; but its motives are registered on the instruments of our own laboratory, and the world of learned considerations lying beyond it we may for the present leave out of account.

We are further aided by the fact that among the great "isms" of public discussion, individualism is the simplest, as it is the most central. Individualism, as we shall be concerned with it, is simply belief in the human individual as the ultimate unit of social struc-

tures. We think of the state as a majestic reality, doing vast things in the world; but individualism holds that there is something more real than the state—the individual. Social groups and institutions are composed of *him* and exist for him, not he for them. And all of the life, all of the intelligence, all of the energy which they have derives ultimately from him. He is the generating focus out of which they are born.

This view of things cannot qualify as a “self-evident truth,” though we in America are likely to regard it as an axiom. If we refer to the plain facts of experience, we seem to see that individuals are products of social groups quite as much as social groups are products of individuals. Mature individuals unite to form families; but these families in turn beget immature individuals. And no individual nor set of individuals can be said to have founded “the family” as an institution. So with the state: dependency seems to run both ways—the citizen depends on the state, the state depends on its citizens. If we are simply reporting the overt facts of society, we should say that Aristotle and Locke are both right—the state is prior to the individual, and the individual is prior to the state:

there is an alternating current or cycle in which neither can claim absolute priority.

To decide this ambiguous situation positively in favor of the individual if it is right to do so must therefore be the product either of a deeper analysis than the surface of experience affords, or else of a faith or intuition which is *liberal* toward the individual. As a matter of history, we see that individualism is a child of those theories and tempers which we call "liberal." The word "liberalism" implies an attitude of confidence toward the undemonstrated powers of the units of society: it means a faith that the welfare of any society may be trusted to the individuals who compose it. Liberalism maintains that the greatest natural resource of any community is the latent intelligence and good will of its members; and it seeks those forms of society which run a certain risk of preliminary disorder in order to elicit that resource. Since individuals can be developed only by being trusted with somewhat more than they can, at the moment, do well, liberalism is a sort of honor system. Its liberality toward individuals will only be justified if those individuals are in turn liberal toward their groups. They must spontaneously give more than they can be compelled to

give—as in any honor system—otherwise the assumptions of liberalism fail.

This is evidently one of the chief reasons for the difficulties in which liberalism finds itself today. The individuals who have been trusted, in our democracies, to develop new energies under freer political conditions have done so. So far, liberalism has been a signal success. But these energies have not infallibly been devoted to the welfare of the society; the individual has frequently seized the opportunity to make something for himself and let society take the consequences. He may be surprised and annoyed to be told that anything else is expected. For liberalism trains people to receive, and only hopes that they will give. If the group is to be liberal toward individuals, they must be recipients of its liberality; and few habits are easier to develop than the habit of being recipients, especially if this receiving is connected with the idea of one's "rights." Liberalism as an honor system needs some kind of supplement if it is to get from these individuals what it requires in order to succeed. Hence, the difficulties of liberalism require us to examine more carefully the nature of this individual unit of society, and probably to distinguish between a sound in-

dividualism and certain unsound counterfeits.

a. The Trend of the Orient.

HUMAN beings are much influenced by what they conceive to be the trend of the times. And though nothing is more difficult than to judge the trend of the social changes in which one is taking part, most human beings have definite convictions on the subject. It is commonly said that we are now moving away from the individualism of the previous generations toward some form of collectivism. It may steady our judgment somewhat if we consider the trend of things in Oriental societies, which we can perhaps more easily estimate in its broader aspects just because of our relative distance.

In this broad sense, the great Orient is moving away from collectivism and toward individualism. The collectivism here in question is not that of a fascist state, but that of the great family or clan group which is at the basis of social life in India, China, Japan, and indeed in almost the whole of Asia. In its typical form, the great family holds the property of the group, receives into a common fund much of the individual income of its members,

maintains its own discipline, decides for its members whom they marry, what and how much they study, how and where they are to be employed. The individual member does not conceive himself as a separable and independent entity in his major decisions and in his social life. His home, his possessions, his manners, his creed are determined for him by this group.

Not long ago, a promising young Oriental student held a graduate fellowship at Harvard, yielding him a modest income of perhaps \$800 for the year. It was assigned to him, as we thought, in recognition of his personal scholarship and for the promotion of his plans for work. His conceptions of it were somewhat different. Toward the middle of the year, he came to the chairman of the department of his studies reporting that his money was all gone, and requesting more for the remainder of the year. His explanation was candid and simple: "Brother got married." He had not arrived at the notion of a type of income which was a strictly personal rather than a family fund; and his first lesson in financial individualism was painful on both sides.

But this lesson is rapidly being learned, at least in the Oriental cities. There are no contemporary examples of the Dhoti-Lota case.

This case—which I presume is legendary—relates to a young Hindu who went to Brazil to make his fortune. He had a fair degree of success and came back to India to enjoy his competence. He was greeted upon his return by members of his family who were all ready to share his gains on the basis of the customary expectations. But the young man having imbibed with the air of the new world something of its individualism refused to regard his property as family property, and the matter came to court. The decision turned on the point whether the traveler had, in his venture, used capital supplied by his family. He maintained that he had gone out without capital; but was driven to admit that his dhoti (cloak) and lota (loin cloth) had been supplied by his relatives. The court interpreted this as a minimal capital, and made its award on the basis of customary Indian practice, allowing the family claims.

This tale may serve to symbolize one of the forces which is tending to break down the family collectivity in the Orient. Wherever the economic man can identify a certain body of wealth as his own personal achievement—one in which the family traditions, occupations, and repute have had no share—he has a strong motive to dispose of it in his own

way. His distinctive self-consciousness having been enhanced by his activity and its fruit, he wishes to express that self-consciousness in the mode of his life. If the young Chinese in a coastal city "makes his own living," he inclines to marry according to his own will, choose the location of his home, build for himself, make his own purchases, and spend his time according to his own tastes. He is an individual in the sense that his whole self-expression flows not from tradition but from his own choices, or more accurately, from his own conception of a "modern" mode of life. He has, in his own lifetime, passed "from status to contract."

This phrase of Sir Henry Maine's, arising from his observation of the India of mid-nineteenth century, was intended to express the course of social evolution in the western world. India furnished him the examples of that realm of status from which we had emerged. The rule of status is the rule of the collective mind of a society when it has achieved a more or less stable equilibrium, so that not even the contemporary collectivity ventures to alter it. It is a wider and deeper expression of the collective mind than the day to day decisions of any communal family. To gain a full concep-

tion of the condition from which the Orient of today is passing into the region of "contract" or of individual choice, it would be well to call to mind the order of castes which still regulates much of life in India, the ideals of which are recorded in the Book of Manu. A few illustrations will suffice:

After having studied the Vedas for thirty-six years or for half that time . . . or until they are perfectly learned, the student shall enter the order of householders. Having bathed with the permission of his teacher and performed the rite of returning home, a twice-born man shall marry a wife of equal caste who is endowed with auspicious bodily marks. . . .

There follow sixty precepts for the conduct of marriage; there are five great sacrifices to be performed; there are elaborate rules for obligatory hospitality, and nineteen groups of people who may not be entertained at sraddha, the family worship. The choice of occupation is likewise hedged about by a dense array of prescriptions, for there are numerous ways in which families "quickly perish."

As for personal behavior, the regulations are minute:

Keeping his hair, nails, and beard clipped, sub-

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duing his passions by austerities, wearing white garments, he shall be always engaged in the study of the Veda. Let him never look at the sun, let him not step over a rope to which a calf is tied, let him not run when it rains, let him not look at his own image in water. . . .

In judging this regime of collective and traditional control of individual life, we have to remember that while the individual who prospers and progresses through his own action finds this control a dead weight and a muffler to his energies, the individual who is unsuccessful or in trouble may find it a necessary and welcome refuge. The marvelous longevity of Oriental civilizations has been due largely to the elastic providence exercised by the great family over its members throughout every exigency of nature or political disaster.

A notable example of the immense value of this family solidarity was furnished in the spring of 1932, at the time of the destruction of the Chapei quarter of Shanghai by Japanese bombardment. Arriving in Shanghai in March while the square mile of ruins was still burning, I found one main street given over to the trek of Chinese refugees trundling away in every sort of conveyance what they could salvage from their ruined properties. I

had seen the results of earthquake and fire at San Francisco in 1906, and assumed that Shanghai would be congested at every turn with camps of the half million homeless and destitute. Many were there, in various temporary shelters—empty and unfinished buildings—but the city was not overwhelmed with the refugees. For most of these people had clan centers in other cities, and with a small ration were being sent on barges up or down the coast to doors on which they had a right to knock and where the group subsistence would unquestioningly be shared with them. It is only by maintaining its collective authority that the family has been able to provide this natural insurance for its members, standing as a living and favoring environment between them and the incalculable outer world.

In spite of all this, the drift toward individualism is unhesitating. The reasons lie much deeper than the personal impulses of successful self-assertion among younger people, touched by the rumors of western life. They lie in the necessities of the national life in the new Oriental states. For no nation can exist unless the idea of the nation finds an intelligent resonance in the minds of the individual citizens. Hence modern nationalism is inevitably democratic. The family can be felt,

but the nation must be thought; the bond of citizenship cannot rest on kinship, but on sympathy in a shared culture, history, and national purpose. The members of a nation must be heads capable of some sense for these things; they must have the rudiments of an education; they must be individuals. Thus the efforts of the new Oriental nations are bent toward developing heads that can think, understand, participate in the national meaning.

The intent of China is fairly well presented in the remarkable treatise of Sun Yat Sen, *The Three Principles of the People*. The principles in question are Nationalism, Democracy, Livelihood, i.e., the livelihood of all as a public responsibility. In this treatise, Sun Yat Sen speaks a little sarcastically of a bit of advice received from an American source to the effect that monarchy would be better than democracy for the present stage of Chinese development. He writes as follows:

The essential question is this:—Is China ripe for democracy? Although the United States is a democratic state, yet when Yuan Shih-kai was trying to become emperor, an American professor named G—— came to China to advise a monarchical form of government, saying that the Chinese people were not progressive in

their thinking, that their culture was behind that of Europe and America, and so they should not attempt a democracy. Yuan Shih-kai made good use of these arguments of G—— and overthrew the republic, making himself emperor.

The attempt was short-lived; and this fact is evidence that the mind of China—the expression is not inadvertent, for there is a unity of disposition running through this vast population—is set toward democracy. And by that same sign, it is set toward popular education. It is in China that the most far-reaching, original, and effective experiments in popular education are today to be found, and the most wholehearted abandonment of its own traditional assumption that of the four “honorable occupations” — farmer, artisan, merchant, scholar—only the scholar need be literate.

And at the center of the “Mass Education Movement” at Ting Hsien, Dr. Y. C. J. Yen has seen clearly that the effort for literacy is merely the beginning and symbol of what is to be done. He adds to the use of the thirteen hundred characters, and to rudiments of sanitation and agriculture, studies in a topic called “citizenship,” which includes an elementary philosophy of the code of the individual Chinese and of his relations to the na-

tion to be built. There are deliberate efforts to develop the habit of coöperation in groups that cross family and clan lines, for purposes such as road-building, village cleanliness, care of trees, and the like, which enlist individual reason, and develop habits of rational discussion.

This is typical of what is happening throughout the Orient. It is moving out of the old collectivism toward an individual conception of life.

b. Origins of Individualism.

IN this hasty picture of the Oriental trend, we have seen enough to realize that this trend is not due as some suppose to a belated imitation of Western mentality, plunging headlong into our old errors just at the moment when we are abandoning them. It is due to the inner logic of an awakened cultural life, which strives to take national form. If we approve of the Asiatic awakening, we cannot withhold our sympathy from its democratic aspirations, whether or not we think them premature; and if we believe that democracy has a place in the Orient, we are bound to accept the degree and kind of individualism which such democracy requires. Thus the Orient may aid in renewing our awareness of the

grounds on which our own individualism originally rested.

I said at the outset that we are not interested in history for the sake of history, but only in so far as it may help us to be clear about our own minds. I propose that we now consider briefly, with this purpose of clarification in mind, how we became individualists, and that we do so with complete disregard of the pattern—highly unconventional, I suspect—which our drafts on history may take.

No one knows when individualism was born. I believe that there was no one birth of the idea, but a number of different births strewn through centuries, which contributed to it. There was an economic individualism which grew up with the industrial revolution, and received a belated theoretic statement in John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy*, about the middle of the nineteenth century. But this individualism of the industrial order harks back to an earlier individualism, that of the "rights of man" and of the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century.

These revolutions, in turn, lead us back to earlier events which prepared for them: the dissolution of the feudal system, the supersession of the guilds, the break-up of those old arrangements of life which resembled in

their hereditary regularity the caste system of India, the arrival of new crafts, of new manufactures, and with all this, of new personal freedom on the part of working men whose labor—no longer the property of a landlord—might be sold here or there to higher bidders, as demand for labor exceeded supply. Status gives way to contract in the economic sphere.

But with this break-up of feudal economy, there is also a political shift of extreme interest. If private wealth exists, kings will desire to tap it. They develop a system of local representation which is not at all for the benefit of the localities, but for the kingly convenience in learning how much he may safely tax one or other of his wealthy subjects. In this system of intelligent inquisition, there is a confession, namely, that royalty is dependent on its subjects, and needs direct routes of communication. The routes once open, they can be traveled in both directions; the representatives become spokesmen of that power on which the kings have confessed dependence. The king may learn who has wealth; he will also learn who has poverty, or complaint, and who will not part with what he has. The individual will begin consciously to affect the state.

To many historians, we have here the true headwaters of the democratic-individualistic stream. But surely, we must go back of all this to the Reformation. For the Reformation, not primarily interested in the economic nor the political man, had something to say to the individual conscience. It represented that conscience not as having a "natural right" to think for itself; but as being under absolute *obligation* to think and believe for itself. This appeal to private opinion or to "inner light" begins to dissolve the collectivism of conscience represented in a final revelation and a universal church. Reason as a splitting and divisive factor invades the harmony of an authoritarian Christendom; and we have today hundreds of sects, each of which encourages its members to see for himself, as a religious duty, while striving to maintain its own solidarity of faith—an attempt to unite opposites. Now it is impossible to kindle the spark of personal thought in respect to religion, and leave it dormant in respect to the other domains of life: hence the individual roused by the Reformation is more readily disposed to become the individual of the cultural, economic, political renaissance.

Having reached backward to the Reformation, in our search for origins, we are at once

referred to the religious background of our Western world, which gave to the Reformation its working idea of the soul and the soul's destiny, without which problems of personal belief would have had no such eminent importance as we attributed to them.

In this conception of the "soul," we plunge into limitless wells of the history of man's thought about himself; but it is a phase of history which remains subject, more closely than any intervening period, to the test of our own self-consciousness. The soul is simply the mental individual, regarded as a substantial and enduring entity. It is our "self" or "ego," the bearer of both conscious and subconscious states, but not identical with them; for it is the same, while they constantly vary. This ancient idea of the "soul" was a tool of distinction: it marked one man off from another; it marked the mental self off from the bodily self; it maintained the separability of the individual person from his community and his family. Because it registered these distinctions, it was commonly supposed to be capable of surviving bodily death and the consequent rupture of communications with the earthly social context.

The Christian religion showed itself some-

what uncomfortable at the idea of the soul leaving its body. It was well enough to make the distinction; but the soul without the body appeared an incomplete and feeble abstraction. Hence the dogma of the resurrection of the body; and the medieval fancy that the soul would be slightly unhappy and *jejeune* even in heaven until its bodily members were recovered! Similarly with the social context. It is true that the soul is to stand alone in the Judgment; and neither will the righteousness of its family help it, nor the sins of its family weigh it down. Yet heaven is often pictured as a place in which broken family links may be restored, and the family structure—under the most fortunate conditions—reproduced with the sublimations appropriate for the Blessed Community. There is no suggestion that the political state will be reinstated in heaven; the religious community displaces it. But in some sense, Christianity in its imagery of the future state shows an awareness that the separability of the soul is relative, not absolute; it is a distinct being, but not a self-sufficient being, and is only completely itself in physical and social environment.

But Plato's conception of the soul and of its destiny was cleaner cut. So far from demanding the survival of the body, he re-

garded it a piece of good fortune that the soul could leave the body behind and all its entanglements. It may be destined to return to another life in this earth, until it is purged of illusion; but before such rebirth it passes through the plain of Forgetfulness where are expunged not alone the ties to former friends and kin, but also the personal memories that bind it to its own past self. It becomes in these respects a pure mental atom, private, solitary, unattached—an ideal individual.

The Western world has inherited in this way two contrasting conceptions of the soul—the Platonic soul as an atomic substance, and the Christian soul as a term within an organic context. These conceptions are not necessarily contradictory, but they constitute an antithesis such as favors fertility in the history of thinking. On the whole, the Founder of Christianity dwelt on the atomic aspect of the soul, in his emphasis on individual responsibility, and on the subordinate value of family ties, symbolized by the demand for rebirth. A man's ultimate relations are solely to God; and perhaps the deepest thing in Christianity is the adequacy with which it presents this ultimate solitude of the soul, not alone in birth, and in death, but in the history of its own ethical problem, which no one can meet for it.

This is the essential freedom of the self, that it stands for a fateful moment outside of all belongings, and determines for itself alone whether its primary attachments shall be with actual earthly interests or with those of an ideal and potential "Kingdom of God." Individuality is not a fixed membership, as of an organ in an organism, but a continued living tension between various possibilities of belonging.

It is because of this searching analysis of the roots of selfhood—far superior to most of the flat psychologies of the present moment—that the ancient and middle periods of our history were able to hand on into modern times the germs out of which our present individualism is born. This individualism has its religious roots—or, not to prejudice the discussion, its metaphysical roots; it has later acquired economic and political sub-roots, so that the modern individual is thought of as having a comprehensive set of "rights" or "owns"—his *own* conscience, his *own* occupation and property, his *own* enterprise and invention, his *own* opinions, his *own* vote, his *own* chance for office.

c. The Logic of Individuality.

IN what we have said there is implied a theory

of history in sharp opposition to various prevalent theories of our learned world. I wish not to conceal this opposition but to emphasize it.

We have lived for a generation or more under the spell of what is called the economic theory of history, a theory which makes the economic interests of men the dominant factor in shaping all their social habits and conceptions. Men think as they do, it is said, because they must work and produce as they do. If such is the case, then this individualism we are considering is first of all a product of economic forces, and the perspective we have just now presented, in which the ethical and metaphysical root is deepest, is all wrong. The prevalent pragmatism of our day falls in nicely with the economic theory; for the idea which "works" must be the idea which fits the economic situation.

Thus, if you consult the writings of Marx or Engels as to the origins of individualism, they will point out that there was at one period of modern history the birth of a "bourgeois class"; and "bourgeois" is perhaps, in Marxian language, a fair psychological equivalent for the being whom we describe as the modern individual. He is, they will say, a product of the destruction of the feudal sys-

tem of production, and the arrival of the factory system, the system of small manufacture. These writers do not sufficiently note that the bourgeois psychology has also penetrated the modern proletariat and the farming classes; individualism is not at all peculiar to merchants and employers: on this account, Arnold Toynbee, or Ernest Barker, or Professor Beard, or Professor Dewey are better interpreters than Marx of the results of the industrial revolution on the human economic unit. But in all of them, the economic factor appears as the decisive shaper of social conceptions.

I challenge this theory partly because I find many American students and writers taking it as a settled truth, a new orthodoxy, which it is naïve, if not wrong, to question. And those who so simply accept a view which is really both unhistorical and unpsychological, do so for the most part with a surprising innocence as to the gravity of the issues involved; for it is not unimportant, for any branch of theory, nor for human living itself, how one thinks of the building materials of his own being. The economic occasions, pointed out by the economic historians, are real occasions, and important ones: they were, in a preceding era of history writing, almost completely

ignored, and an enlightening swing of attention to them was in order. But they have never been the prime movers of human history: the economic transformation of the modern world was in fact merely the finishing touch in outlining the individual, whose mentality had already been essentially established. It is the shaking of the pod, which separates the ripened peas, and lets them fall out separate.

Is there not an inherent absurdity in supposing that men could begin to act as self-sufficient individuals without preparation in thinking of themselves as such, and justification in doing so? The "economic factors" of modern life could not freely operate on men's minds until logical factors had prepared those minds and ethical factors released them. To illustrate this, let us look for a moment somewhat more closely at one or two of the various types of occasion which marked the close of the Middle Ages.

There were several events, lying outside of any logic, which made for a scarcity of labor, beginning with the Black Death in the middle of the fourteenth century. Upon this dearth of workmen, there appears a novelty in Europe: labor bidding and bid for in town markets; serfs considering soberly whether it

would not be profitable to desert such attachments and livings as they had and take on new employments. An unaccustomed question for serfs to consider—"Whose man shall I be?"—a question removed from custom and transferred to the realm of choice. Some of the more courageous souls actually making the leap. Then, as a natural consequence, consternation among landlords, who appeal to public authority to aid in keeping their labor at home: *their* labor! They, at least, are not prepared to conceive the serf apart from themselves: he is to them not an individual, he is an organ in an organism which must not be disturbed in its workings! Hence the "Statutes of Labourers"; providing, among other things, that deserters may be forcibly brought back, and that the enticing away of any man's man shall be counted an act of "seduction." (Do we not recall similar laws in our own southern districts less than a century ago?) The economic incentives were present: the logical conditions were arriving; the ethical justification was not ready; and because it was not ready the economic individual with all the "economic forces" in his favor could not at that moment freely emerge.

The logical conditions I speak of were simple and to us obvious, so much so that it is

easy for historians, as well as for ourselves, to forget that they once constituted a formidable obstacle. Formally, the point is this: that if A is always united with B, then A can be defined or identified by its relation with B; but if A is associated now with B, now with C, now with D . . . , it cannot be defined or identified by its relation with any one of these, and tends to set itself up in the mind as an independent object. If A is a human person, and B its family or local community, and if there are no alternative groups of comparable importance, A is likely to think of himself, and to be thought of, in terms of his surname as if his family were an inseparable part of his total being. But if there are other groups, C, D, and so on, which may mean as much or more to him, then he can no longer be thought of simply as Nicholas of Cusa or Donald MacDonald; he tends to be considered, and to consider himself an independent being, so far as those variable relationships are concerned.

Now, living, as we do, among hundreds of social groupings, most of them of recent and artificial origin, bidding for our membership, it is hard to place ourselves in the mental situation in which such alternatives were few and insignificant. Nevertheless, we can see clearly that men are not born as independent,

self-sufficient entities; that they grow slowly toward separateness of being and destiny. The organic separateness which a human being achieves at birth endows him with no effective independence of family life. He long remains a vessel for tradition to fill; and even at his majority, he remains as a rule within the group of those whose language and manners and presuppositions are familiar to him, held by a subconscious sense that he can hardly breathe outside it. We can understand that in earlier times this sense was more insistent and more profoundly qualified the person. The merits of the group are his merits; its faults are his faults; for the crimes of any member, he may properly be called on to suffer, as the booty and bag of any one becomes the resource of all. Hence there was law in the world long before there were individual rights; law represents the general interest in settlement, peace, order: it repels wrong first of all as a disturbance and public scandal, not as an infringement of private right.

If, then, it seems to us slightly odd to regard the group as a real being, "prior to the individual," there must have been a much longer stretch of history during which it would have seemed strange to regard the human unit as a separable entity, from whom

groups derived their being. For the family, the state, are evidently the durable, potent, and active beings; the persons are transient, permeable, weak. The very stuff of their thinking is borne to them in the medium of the group language, which no one person has made. The logical scheme we have mentioned emphasizes this point: for while the state today has its members, N , on another day it will have another set of members, N' ; and can therefore not be identified with any one set. It is the group which sets itself apart in the mind as having an independent reality.

It is for this reason that the serf's question, above referred to (Whose man shall I be?), may be taken as the symbol of a logical revolution, the prelude to a coming economic and political individualism. For it marks the turning point from the dominance of the formula, *To every group, numerous men and sets of men*, toward the dominance of the formula, *To every man, numerous groups, and possible groups*.

These two formulæ are not inconsistent: in our own society, they coexist. But the arrival of the second to coördinacy with the first is the event which begins to loosen the peas in the pod, by interrupting the mental habits

proper to the first formula when it has the field. Imagine, for instance, an absurdly simplified society, such as never existed on earth, built on the pattern of serial inclusion, such as Aristotle puts forward: the individual included in the family, the families in villages, the villages in city states. In such a series, the state has no need to know the names and fortunes of individuals: it needs only deal with the next lower group, the village; and the village needs only deal with the families. These families will naturally be presumed by city and village to consist of a sufficient number of human beings to fill the scheme of family life; and these members as units of population, will be presumed to keep their places in the scheme, so that they can be found *via* the family when public services are required. In some such fashion the feudal governing class stood between the state and the people, supplying the state with the men and the money required to maintain its protective functions. The serf must always be discoverable as the lord's man, one of a disposable number—from the view of the state, hardly an individual. (Of course, these population units have their lovers; and love and friendship always pick out individuals in any group to celebrate, to help, or to mourn. Love is the one persistent

and searching force of individuation operative in human history; and without its germinal work, all these logical and economic factors we are considering would produce little but husks of individual life. But we are speaking of public life, and here, in the society of serial inclusion, a man is just another one of a kind, a number, a unit of resource, a member of his own crowd and kin.)

Now the opening of the modern era is marked by a multiplication of possibilities in the intermediate groupings between the human unit and the state, together with a large defection from traditional lines of occupation, so that the state itself—while the individual was getting a new glance at himself—was driven to analyze all the cross groups into their common measure, the individual, in order to find an unambiguous way of regarding its own anatomy. The state of mind of the individual we can conjecture, remembering the events making new calls for man-power: there were expeditions, explorations, and a sudden emergency—a New World inviting settlement, proposing new types of employment, including much crude Civilizing Activity, calling for crude, dogmatic, strong-willed, ungentle pioneering intelligence. Given a group of men otherwise restless, endowed

with a modicum of intelligence, and sensible of a quantum of potential effort in their physical frame, the new economic and other inducements are likely to be sufficient to finish their budding conviction of separability. The formula, To every man, several possible groups, becomes the dominant fact in his consciousness. Each group does something to make the man; but also, so he sees, each man does something to make the group. He may actually construct new and undreamed of types of association. The locus of reality passes from the group to the individual; the peas are shaken from the pod.

There is evidently here a strong invitation to fallacy. For the mental process is similar to that by which we abstract the color from the surface or shape it colors, and conceive it an independent thing. If a red color may attach to a round or a square shape, it is not to be defined by either: color and shape are independent variables. But we cannot deduce from this fact either shape without some color or color without some shape. So an individual who may pertain to a family or a club or a church or a trade-union or a political party may be too hasty in advancing from independent variability to independent existence. When the language of "natural rights" and

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the social contract theories begin to appear, and present the state as a product of individual consents, it may be forgotten that the community as a silent member has stood over the individual in his passage from group to group, or in his hesitation between them, ascribing to him those very rights which led him to feel himself an unassociated atom. In his political, as in his religious background, there was a needed legitimization of his logical and economic emergence.

Summing up this line of thought, we find that the economic forces which draw out, or shake out, the economic individual are operating within a set of mental and social conditions apart from which they could have had no such effect. Among them we reckon, beside that fundamental religious obligation which carries with it an assurance of individual worth, closely akin to the more intimate stimulus of human affection, a newly awakened confidence in his own reason, as able to penetrate the order of nature and of society, and the logical abstraction which outlined him as the common denominator of many variable groups, some of which were competing for his franchise and support.

From such mental premises, there follow at

once a few consequences, which subsequent thought gradually drew.

First, an essential *equality* of men, since the respects which set a man apart from his group are the same for all men. The necessity for reliance on his reason as he leaves the shelter of fixed group-belonging and its authority lies upon all men so separated, and implies a native fund of reason qualitatively the same in all.

Second, an essential *liberty*, since each individual, as chooser of his group, must mentally contain all these social possibilities in himself; what society is to be depends on him, rather than what he is to be upon society.

Third, a set of *rights* which spring from his needs as a man. These needs become the basis of his choice of his many possible groups, which are thus conceived to exist for him rather than he for them. But since the source of this provision for him is the group of his equals, their common lot brings them together in a *fraternity*, in which each plays providence to all the rest.

From individualism, thus follows what we came to speak of, in the nineteenth century, as the "Liberal" pattern of thought. We know it in its maturity. It is well to recall it also in its early form, as we find it in the often pro-

phetic phrases of old John Locke. Locke, born in 1632, I like to think of as growing up with America—in fact almost contemporary with the opening of New England, and the infancy of Harvard College—and as having in mind in much of his political thought, the new and half empty land across the water. Locke's individual was an individual with rights—men were born “free and equal,” according to him—but they were also individuals with a moral sense, and apart from this were not complete men, a circumstance which later individualism tended to forget. One of his most telling words was uttered in answer to Hobbes, who had proposed that justice is an obligation which comes first with organized society. Locke took as his illustration the promise of a trader to an Indian, in the wilderness of America apart from every organized government. The obligation to keep that promise is quite as real, thought Locke, as if the whole authority of Europe were there to enforce it. For, as he put it, “Truth and the keeping of faith belong to man as man, and not as a member of society.” This is one of the great sayings in the history of social philosophy; and it marks an essential trait of any valid individual, economic or otherwise.

CHAPTER II

IS LIBERALISM WORKING BADLY?

THERE is a rumor abroad in the world that the ills which our present social order is suffering are due to an excess of Liberalism, and especially to an excess of Individualism, which is its kernel. We are supposed to learn from these troubles that individual liberty (among other goods) ought to be much reefed in favor of a substantial, decisive collectivity. On this simple prescription various new regimes are set up in Europe, in Turkey, and elsewhere; and in default of new regimes, new Parties; and in default of new Parties, new dictatorial Hopes and Tendencies, neither Left nor Right, but toward the Zenith.

Now haste in diagnosis is the temptation of sufferers; and haste cannot pause to discriminate; it splays blame broadcast over whole systems or modes of thought. With the heroic effectiveness of earlier medicine, it bleeds and purges for every fever. The so-called experimental method in social science strikes a more scientific air; yet it comes close to catastrophe on this same problem of diagnosis. For while

any tyro can tell when things are working badly—*ergo something is wrong*—there is nothing in the failure of an experiment, any more than in the general fact of “sickness,” to tell which organ is out of order. There is no escape, even in pragmatism, from the pains of rational analysis.

In the present chapter, I shall be proposing a diagnosis, and shall be involving you in this general critical pain. Let me therefore state at the outset my conviction that Liberalism, taken as this same pattern of thought formulated (not born) in the nineteenth century, has been the most successful conscious political hypothesis of human history. As we look back on the Liberal Revolutions and their consequences from 1688 onwards, there is not one of them whose work any large number of us would wish undone. They were steps in the right direction.

They were right because they were embodiments, for their time, of that liberal spirit whose work, far wider than that of any special political pattern or “-ism,” will never be finished in human history. The liberal spirit pertains to human nature, not to any party, religion, or historic movement. It is human nature’s revolt against its own perpetual tendency to egoism. Thus we find Confucius and

Mencius placing foremost in the list of human virtues *jen* (benevolence, reciprocity, or humanity) whose character (which might be analyzed into the elements "man-two-alike") is an epitome of the rule to regard others as oneself. Selfhood must be self-centered, for to be a self is to live from a center; and selfhood must perpetually correct the perspective which is inseparable from having a "point of view"; it must forever lean against its own infinite self-reference of the whole world of society and nature, especially when it is flattered by the enjoyment of special powers and position. Society generates inequalities in the search for men who can lead action; and these inequalities in perennially new ways generate self-importance and destroy sanity. Men never do their hero-worship well enough, never give the true hero enough scope; and on the other hand there is hardly a hero in history who has come through the peril of being worshiped without losing his judgment and his instinctive sense for realities. When therefore the hero becomes an institution, whether in monarchy or otherwise, counter-institutions must grow up, either to furnish him a salutary and saving restraint, or to receive his ruins. The liberal movements of Western Europe and America established

these counter-institutions, and their work was well done.

With this affirmation in mind, let me now say that in my view the specific pattern, the Liberalism of the nineteenth century, has done its work. Its formulæ contained weaknesses which were once negligible but which have now become serious because the spirit and conditions of society have profoundly altered. Its very success in producing communities of such numbers, extent, variety, and internal power-differences has brought to light difficulties for which, as a special set of ideas, it has no answer. Some of our present evils, I believe, may fairly be traced to an individualism too starkly and simply conceived. Let me first mention them, and then elaborate the diagnosis.

There are three main defects, as I see the matter. Liberalism has shown itself incapable, alone, of achieving social unity. It has cultivated a pernicious separation of individual rights from individual duties. It has lost its emotional force, because its emotional basis was in a serious degree unrealistic.

a. Failure To Achieve Social Unity.

I BELIEVE we may assume without argument

that some sort of social unity is desirable—at least enough unity to act together, to decide on what is to be done, and to do it. Whether or not a nation has a mind of its own, apart from the persons who compose it, it is certainly important that it should be able to “make up its mind,” otherwise it ceases to function, and then to exist. In any group in which action is the primary need, and in which delay in decision may be fatal, as in a ship’s crew, or in an army, unity is secured, at a very high cost, by vesting responsibility finally in one man. In the life of a state, prompt action is commonly less important than thoughtful action, and so debate has a function which in the military group has to be minimized. But to a state also, the capacity to decide and to act is a necessity of life: it must be able to achieve unity of will. Further, debate itself is meaningless unless it registers on some sort of unitary mentality.

Now early Liberalism had no qualms on this head. It could assume unity as something easy to get—social wholeness was a habit inherited from feudal society. It might easily have seemed that unity in the social mind was a natural product! The popular state was to be built on the same pattern as the Leviathan, only with the circulation reversed: the many

will compose just as good an organism as the tyrant can make—so it was thought. But the course of experience has shown that unity has become progressively harder to get.

Society is not an organism; it only faintly resembles one and that least of all when it is analyzed into individuals, each of which can set up independent life, as the cells of a body never pretend to do. The unity of an organism exists from the first, set up by the conjunction of two cells so supplementary as to compose a working whole. The unity of a social body—possibly excepting the family—has to be achieved; and in the case of vast societies like nations can only be approximated in any concrete enterprise. The effort of this achievement is at a maximum when the units with which one starts are “individuals,” rather than groups partly amalgamated by coöperation, kinship, and history.

As a rule, the larger the social group, the less is it possible to conceive of it as a result of the conscious consent of its individual members. Unless nations had grown together by slow stages, upon some ancient nucleus of clans and tribes having a real or fictitious blood bond to hold them together, this enormous association we call the modern state could never have arrived. It has produced the

individuals; the individuals could never have produced it, but they may quite possibly disintegrate it. What men of the prescience of Napoleon recognized of the new economy and the new liberal politics of their day was true: taken alone, it implied the ultimate pulverization of society.

Let me illustrate this point by the division of labor, which is essential to the making of a modern individual. For unless the individual is free to choose his own specialty, he misses the most valuable occasion for developing what is unique in himself. Now suppose my interest is in being a railroad engineer. I do not want to encumber my mind with the business of building locomotives nor of constructing railroads. I am free to be an engineer if, and only if, someone else will build the roadbed, conduct the finances of the road, make the rolling stock, buy it and put it on the rails, work out the signal system, and so on through some three hundred special tasks. If these preliminaries are all provided, we can step into our locomotive cab, exhibit our skill, and receive our reward!

The specialist must be able to take for granted that the three hundred other specialists are not only in existence, but are brought

together, and their work coördinated by some directing head. In point of fact, it would be hard to find any one head in the railroad industry which carries in mind all these conspiring specialties. There is a "going concern," which seems of itself to collect the essential parts, though no one is aware of the totality, the financial directorate, the managing and superintending functions, being spread through a number of persons and boards.

Nevertheless, there is a working unity. Any particular railroad exists today because of the purpose which has animated the project of land transportation since the first quarter of the nineteenth century. There was a time when this animating interest was in a single head. And this interest remains as a continuous thread in the minds of those who carry on the thousand-fold more intricate business today. The mental unity of the railroad is in its consciously-known function; it lies primarily in the head or heads responsible for carrying out that purpose through all its myriad contributory means. Without this unity, three hundred types of specialist would be unable to act, and their individuality would so far be thwarted. And by themselves they would be clearly incompetent to compose that unity.

Now the state is in rather a worse case than the railroad because it has no such obvious and concrete something-to-do. It, too, is a going concern with a history; but its functions appear sporadic, it makes laws when we need them, it protects us when we require protection, polices us on occasion, and carries on a few miscellaneous enterprises such as postal service and public schools. It is far harder to find a single mind to which all these functions are equally and totally present than in the case of the railroad. Yet no individual is mentally free to pursue any specialty whatever unless these functions are taken care of. The business of the community is in a peculiarly dangerous position: we do not add up into a social whole.

It was natural to assume that a group of representatives whether of localities or of interests would sum themselves up into a fair representation of the whole state. This might have occurred if each member of Parliament, let us say, regarded it as his function to represent Britain, and not merely Bristol. But he is defined as the member from Bristol; and when his survival as a member in Parliament depends on his satisfying the local electorate by bringing home local results, the facile assumption that he will represent Britain be-

gins to vanish. In such a body it is just the total-interest which is nowhere represented.

When, further, the acting sovereign power is divided into three branches, specifically advised to "check and balance" one another; and when an "administration" is composed of fragments from a litter of competing parties, each one animated by a strong passion for party existence—for how can it serve the country unless it first exists?—the strong flow of political life is distracted into a delta of marshy trickles. Realizing that in the past power has been abused, we think the enemy is *power* rather than the character that uses it, and we have made impediment a virtue; we continue to chain the ghost of departed royalty, and live in fear of tyranny when the ruler has become ourselves! Thus, we have brought together a set of individuals and individual interests, like a set of loose limbs, thinking they will compose a body politic; but they find themselves competitors, disclaim one another, and the "general will" snuffs out.

This is our experience, not our theory. Our theory tells us that each individual is capable of thinking "We" as well as "I"; and that since human beings are born in groups, they will naturally put "We" first and "I" afterward. But if our individualism has trained

them in the rightness and necessity of putting the "I" foremost, it may well have brought us to a pass where no genuine political "We" can get a voice.

In the economic realm we have the same situation. There is a familiar entity called "Business," the sum total of our economic life. Business claims no head of its own. Each particular business has its unity, as we have seen; but Business as a whole has no corporate unity, no particular something-to-do, no total destiny. To be sure, it sums itself up, fragmentarily, in Chambers of Commerce, and—since Washington foolishly professes not to represent it—represents itself at Washington. It is capable of corporate maladies, depressions, and seems to the listening ear to issue corporate complaints. But it has no power, as a whole, to act!

What, then, and who is Business? A lot of Able Heads, *bona fide* individuals, each representing millions of individual transactions entered into willingly on both sides, as befits a regime of free contract among free individuals, and therefore presumably benefiting both buyer and seller. *Ergo*, in sum total, a happy and prosperous community. How can a sum of events, each of which doubly in-

creases the general happiness, have any other result! Yet something is wrong here.

Each transaction lies between two individual heads, one of which is the relatively Able Head; and each of these individual transactions is subject to able manipulation, so as to leave the largest Net in the hand belonging to the Able Head. Each Able Head then calls on Washington for further individual blessing, to improve—not the product, not the lot of the consumer, not the Greatest Happiness, but the Net. Is not this the whole duty of the economic individual? And will not a collection of handsome Nets constitute a prosperous land? This seems to be the fallacy. They seem to constitute rather a set of prosperous spots, like pimples of prosperity on a visage predominantly pale. They do not add themselves into the General Health.

Now it still belongs to the dominant creed of Business in this country that total prosperity is made by multiplying individual prosperity; and that present troubles are not due to any defect of the individualistic principle, but simply to the circumstance that it does not yet reach a sufficient number.

The negative side of this doctrine is certainly valid: a land none of whose citizens

have any margin is necessarily a poor land. In traveling through the Ireland of a few years ago, shortly after the "Troubles" had been settled, at the incidental cost of the burning and destruction of much wealth and the expulsion of alien owners—perhaps a necessary cost—one felt that resources were gone, employment on a large scale was gone, enterprises were hard to float, there were few that could be taxed. And on the positive side, it is also true that a land some of whose citizens have large margins, even if they are a small minority, is a land which has *potential* public resources. And there is an erosion which attends individual wealth-holding: the mountain, however it may be growing, is always flattening out into the plain, and heightening the common level.

But the crucial question is whether these private reservoirs of wealth have any regular working-relations to the public concerns. And the answer is, that under the individualistic theory they are not invited to have any such. It is greatly to the credit of the general temper of the American holders of wealth that not a few of them have deliberately laid lines from private resources to public benefits; they have endeavored to consider the whole community; they have acted against the inertia

of the system. It is not that private owners are devoid of good will; it is simply that the Liberal theory of property terminates in the processes by which they receive possession; individualism has no theory of the relation of private wealth to the working commonwealth, except through the taxing power, which appears as an unwelcome intrusion from a political arm not wholly above suspicion of self-interest, and not as the normal development of the owner's will. Of course there are moral defects which large possession has always invited, and from which we are not immune; but there is also a defect in the system of our economic ideas, a defect of unfinishedness. It is not merely that, on these views, great private wealth is consistent with widespread poverty and unemployment; it is also that the social whole, on the principles of *laissez faire*, is commonly kept on starvation rations for all the great common ends which constitute the life of the national community. The unity is not built.

The result appears when Business faces a position of more than normal difficulty—as it did at the beginning of 1933—in which a common action might solve the common dilemma. Suppose a position in which, if all industries were to start together, each assuming

the same sort of risk in its own proportion, paying out of capital or reserve in order to start the economic circulation, the emergency would be met. Now since Business is composed of Individuals each of whom prefers that the other should start first and assume the exceptional risks of loss, the rational prudence of each requires him to wait to see whether the movement will become general. As a result, not a general movement, but a general shuffle, a few furtive starts by the less perfectly inhibited Heads, quickly quashed by sagacious comrades, counselors, stockholders, embarrassed general shifting from foot to foot making as if one were starting, then a general standstill more fatal than rest itself. Action as a whole, and for the whole, is beyond the reach of a purely individualistic enterprise.

b. Rights without Duties.

THE second point in our diagnosis is that Liberalism has infected the Western mind with the disease of Rights-without-Duties. The word "right" has become attached to the ambiguous word "natural"; and a natural right would appear to be a right with which a person is born, one which he cannot help having, one for which he has paid no price, and has no price to pay, furthermore, one of

which he cannot divest himself, and of which no one can deprive him. This latter property is conveyed in the term "inalienable."

To think of himself as thus invincibly endowed was unquestionably an encouraging reflection for the new-born individual, who had to fight for recognition. Fortified with such a belief, the common man could stand in the face of any artificial powers, kings or parliaments, and flourish the claim that is his by the higher authority of Nature! It had, in this way, a pragmatic truth; the truth less of an instrument than of an arsenal. But the particular fight then to be waged is over, and the question arises whether this Nature, who doubtless has given human nature to men, has also given them this elaborate right-equipment for nothing!

This notion of a right-by-birth may be connected with the idea that whoever brings a being into the world incurs an obligation. The infant has not asked for life; life is thrust on him; if it is an opportunity, for which he may naturally be grateful, it is also a risk and a labor, for which he may properly demand equipment. His parents owe him something, not for anything he has done, but for something they have done. On the same score, society owes him something, Nature owes him

something, God owes him something. He is correct in this assumption: they have started something which they cannot fairly stop, and to which they are bound to offer the possibility of good rather than evil. Begetting a man is not conferring on him so unconditional a boon that the begetter is then justified in exacting perpetual servitude from the begotten. To beget a man is to beget not merely a potential equal, but a superseder; and whoever gives birth must at once prepare to retreat before what is born. This situation with its rights and duties is embedded in natural relationships. But this has little to say of the relations among mature persons, contemporaries, which constitute the primary field of "natural rights."

For the mature person, *there are no unconditional rights*. And the assumption that there are such has passed with the altered times from a useful encouragement to a pernicious flattery.

I recall a good Italian woman who had been burned out in the fire of 1906 in San Francisco. Her home had been on Telegraph Hill; and the Relief Committee had intrusted me with the task of putting up for her a temporary home on that site. During this operation she told me some of her experiences, one

of which related to a consignment of bags of flour which had been sent to the priest of that parish for distribution among the refugees. She had gone to the parish house to claim her bag of flour. There was some small argument on the score of her residence; but the claim was allowed. And then, as she said with a touch of pride, "I go to the nearest street corner, and empty my flour into the gutter. To bake my own bread, I never do it. But *I have my rights!*"

This woman had imbibed deeply of the American spirit; she was an individualist; she had rights by status, and not by the condition of any corresponding duty.

The society which feeds on the diet of such invincible self-esteem becomes corrupted in a vital respect. For the conditions of all rights are moral conditions; without good will, all rights drop off.

If Liberalism had recalled its modern character in the works of John Locke, it could hardly have forgotten that being "born free and equal" meant with him simply an immunity from being exploited; and that this situation carries with it an imperative duty to refrain from exploiting anyone else. To claim a right is at the same moment to attrib-

ute it to others, and their duty to my right is reciprocated in my duties to their rights. For every right receivable, then, there are innumerable duties payable. That right of "equality" which defends me from the arrogance of a thousand pretending superiors defends a hundred thousand against my own arrogance. Hence the cry of "my right" should never have been uttered except with the undertone of a vast humility.

And it is this which is so easily taken as the pure birthgift of Fortune, with the question near at hand whether any such thing as duty can be recognized by the modern man. "The world owes every man a good break"; owes him not the pursuit of happiness, but happiness-in-hand. And since rights are inalienable, it matters not what his actions or sentiments may be toward himself or toward others; no negligence, debasement, crime can forfeit what Nature has once for all kneaded in with the substance of his being. An inalienable right thus becomes a *privilege*, privilege being that specific virus which the liberal revolutions set themselves to destroy. It is this same moral toxin which, under the guise of costless rights, Liberalism has unintentionally spread through the whole community.

Every one of us is witness of the wreckage.

In the early days the symptom of moral damage seemed to be the ruin of manners of which Burke so bitterly complained. The *tiers état*, encouraged, was also emboldened; it could wreak its necessary deeds of revolt only with an incidental violence to something decent in itself; it had to be rude to royalty, and feeling a lingering compunction for that rudeness, brazened it out into brutality. For brazenness is always unnatural though brought to the defense of natural rights. This era has passed; and brazenness has advanced from form to substance. Its contemporary guise is the disposition to take and to receive without acknowledgment or sense of debt.

We know the common catalogue of its specimens,—the “idle rich,” the tricky competitor, the labor-grinding employer, the land grabber fattening on increments unearned. These are the lay figures of economic complaint, and they are there. But they are not alone: look about you. You know the neighbor of whom it is true that the more you do for him the more you owe him: for your several loans, advances, gifts appear to him his due—“does he not need them!” You know perhaps the woman citizen who has brought nine children into the world to a stupid father, and who holds the village accountable for a

living for all eleven, and as good as any, since, as she says "Have I not done my part?" You know perhaps the many thousands of, I will not say students, but frequenters of colleges throughout the land, expecting to slip from Education to a Leadership, for which they present no wraith of fittedness. Or the other thousands of noncollege youth on Federal pay rolls, having abandoned their usual employments, and who to receive this bounty have been willing to declare themselves Paupers! When the common stock of America, of New England, is thus corrupted through the long, insidious schooling of rights-receivable and duty-free, Liberalism has not merely shown a flaw, it has undermined itself and prepared the way for a general regime of dependence.

c. The Emotional Defect.

THE third point of deficiency in Liberalism is the natural root of the others. Liberalism's emotional appeal, tremendous in its fighting days, has slowly oozed away. It was founded on an unsalted amiability, arising from *a priori* principles, hopeful postulates about human nature, valid enough but untested and incomplete.

If one has to choose between the two propo-

sitions, "man is by nature good" and "man is by nature evil," it is doubtless better to choose the first; but why choose, when man by nature is neither good nor evil, and becomes in the course of his growth something of both? To his goodness—amiability and trust; to his evil—pugnacity, rebuke, discipline. The love of man must be a realistic love, a clear-eyed will to make the better elements prevail, while unshirkingly sensible that the defective elements are there. Until Liberalism learns how to include in its hopeful program the provision for correction and the honorable severities of living, it will be no guide for the steps now to be taken. No strong social order can be built on the basis of the amiable sentiments alone.

The assumption that you have only to educate men alike to make them effectively equal as citizens was excellent as a working hypothesis, for the possibilities of the human stuff can never be known by any sort of psychological fact finding or mental test—they can only be discovered by experiment on the basis of what *may be there*. But taken as a dogma, this theory of potential equality was not observant and critical enough to make the necessary revisions. As a result, Liberalism has bred a race of self-confident, vigorous men;

but it has not bred a race that can be trusted with power or wealth. The atmosphere of faith which released their genius has failed to maintain their solicitude to be worthy of the new trust: there has been no tonic in the air to rouse compunction in them—they are unacquainted with the word. In the general softness, honest standards tend to disappear. The chief source of suffering and discontent regarding the passing Liberal age is not that it has evolved its own special brands of poverty, injustice, political ineptitude; it is the experience of a prevalent flabby mediocrity of mind and character which begins, in our virile moments, to inspire a sort of moral loathing. To say that each man is as good as the next means only that the next is as poor a sort as the first.

One of the tests of any system is whether it tends to reproduce its kind and improve on it. The art of music will not vanish so long as it continues to elicit musicians who want to absorb its tradition and add to it. Liberalism has ceased to beget Liberals. Its products tend to be progressively weaker than the original stock. It was born as a set of principles worth fighting for, and having to fight; its beneficiaries today number few fighting

men and fewer with principles to fight for. It is not simply that the cause has been won and we have come into the piping-times of peace—God knows there is plenty to be done before the world is even decently liberal. It is that with the first principles of Liberalism there went a spirit of indulgence, a partisan insistence of the virtues of the mass man because he was a mass man, an overrectification of the false balance. But a gram of indulgence breeds a pound of self-indulgence in the protégé; and self-indulgence can achieve no principle, Liberal or otherwise.

If a dour critic were to say that Liberalism as a dominant note in American education has produced a nation of spoiled and juvenile minds, unable to think, devoid of the power of self-criticism and therefore incapable of mature political responsibility, we might consider his picture unduly savage, a mere half truth; yet as a half truth, hardly to be denied. And souls so softened are necessarily illiberal at the scratch, behind the murk of their supposed sentiments, because the constant exercise of the liberal spirit is one of the difficult ways of living. The fair-weather Liberal, who is kind chiefly to those at a distance with whom he has no long-time dealings, is the hypocrite who falsifies every social actuality,

beginning with his own moral condition which he refrains from discovering.

I will venture, with profound regard for the meaning of a great parable, to enforce this point by a device which I trust you will not misinterpret; for the modern man must face the dilemma of his own emotional judgments. There is the familiar story of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves; of the priest and the Levite who passed by; and of a certain Samaritan who as he journeyed came where he was, and when he saw him had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds and set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Who is there that listens to that story without saying to himself, "If I were in that position, I would be as the good Samaritan," for in that spirit of compassionate and creative aid for the exploited lies the heart of the Liberal consciousness. And now, with all reverence for that impulse, let us continue the tale as it develops in the experience of the modern man.

And on the morrow as the Samaritan was about to depart there came another traveler, seeking one who had killed his servant and robbed him

of his merchandise. And when he had heard of him who had fallen among thieves and had visited him, he found among what was still left to him portions of his own goods. Then he knew him for the man who had killed and robbed his servant, and had later been set upon and robbed of that which he had first stolen.

Then was the heart of the Samaritan sore troubled, and he was fain to repent him of his mercy. Yet when he had meditated, he repented not, but he succored him, and provided for his recovery; and when he was healed, he delivered him to the guard.

Now it is not the business of the philanthropic impulse to make preliminary inquiries as to the respectability and personal history of those who require aid. It is the greatness of human mercy that it is neither prudential nor scientific; it acts on what is before it, a man in distress. And frequently, this newly established social bond makes all past history impertinent. But we are speaking of the building principles of the great society, in which the touch of the state cannot come with the personal force of the philanthropic deed. The modern man, acting through his institutions, is bound to consider who it is that is being incorporated into the state, not as a patient being cured, nor as a wronged sufferer being

reëstablished, but as a permanent working partner in the body politic. He has two things to consider, and not one only. He has to remember the fundamental power of love which includes a faith in possibilities not yet manifested in fact; but he has also to consider the sincerity of the recipient of trust, which shows itself in willingness to meet the severe conditions of competence. Here Nietzsche's word is in order—his word "To the Sympathetic Ones"—

If your friend is in trouble, be a bed for his suffering. But let it be a field bed, a hard bed: in this way you will best serve him.

To myself I offer my love, and to my neighbor as myself. The will of all love is, the beloved one to *create*. And all creators are hard.

This also is a half truth. But it means that our liberalism and our individualism face an emotional problem which is not easy, not disposed of by the principle of love to one's neighbor, without definition or analysis. In subsequent chapters, I trust we may do something toward finding a solution for the problems now heaped up in unrelieved immensity before us.

CHAPTER III

THE DIALECTIC OF LIBERALISM

WE have mentioned three ways in which our liberal principles have been working badly. If we are to follow a pragmatic philosophy, that which does not work is not true, and should be changed off for something else. This admonition, which has already led to the vehement rejection of democracy and all its works in various quarters, does not of itself indicate where the trouble lies, nor how much should be discarded or changed. Our analysis may help us to avoid "throwing out the baby with the bath." But we may gain some insight from a principle which has kinship both with pragmatism and with the common sense of experimental science in social affairs—I mean the principle of the "dialectic" in history.

Now the dialectic is a sort of logical movement which history is supposed to manifest when we consider its major turns or changes. As Hegel used the idea, he conceived human history as a long, continuous argument. The theme of this argument is the philosophy of life: human beings, having to work out by

trial and error the right ways, or the most auspicious ways, of living, make their experiments together. These experiments are at first hardly conscious and formulated—had they been, they would not have given the color and flavor to entire civilizations: they are at first subconscious, semi-instinctive ways of taking the world which find expression in customs, art, myth, religion, politics, and ultimately in philosophy. Thus China, India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, develop characteristic qualities, and transmit them as so many ideas into the stream of human thought. As qualities, they have no quarrel with one another: each civilization contributes a permanent flavor and beauty in its art to the cumulative treasures of the race. As ideas, however, they are in apparent conflict. They contribute to the wealth of human insight, but they do so at the cost of being superseded by more adequate statements: they seem to their own time to be final, but they lose that position in the organism of advancing truth. It commonly happens that when a culture has reached the point of complete self-conscious formulation of its own spirit, it dies, gives way to another.

Progress in the arts of living, according to the dialectic view, is not a steady forward mo-

tion, but an alternating movement. An idea incompletely valid will lead by reaction to an opposing mode of thought; the thesis calls forth an antithesis. Mankind tries out the extremes before it finds a middle path, which is not a compromise, nor a golden mean, but a union of valid elements in both of the contrasting positions. The synthesis, in Hegel's terminology, supplants the thesis and antithesis, but also conserves them. Nothing which the human mind has once seen and lived by is ever, in this way of reading history, rejected as wholly false; it is retained, sublimated, in the successive new perceptions that emerge.

One sees that the dialectical method of reading history is a variety of the experimental method. This slow tacking progress occurs because truth is not revealed at once to the human mind, whether as a set of axioms or as a finished revelation; the race has had to mingle thought with experience, its logic is spread out through long stretches of time. But it is a form of experience in which each imperfect thought *furnishes a clue* to its successor. This is its chief difference from the haphazard experimentalism of the pragmatic philosophy.

Karl Marx, as a rebellious follower of

Hegel, kept his belief in this dialectical principle in history. But in his view the dominant theme of the historical argument is not, as Hegel thought, metaphysical truth and human duty; it is economic efficiency and the consequent ordering of society. The ultimate necessity, whether or not men are conscious of it, is that any social order shall use the most effective modes of production available: the true revolutions are the turning points marked by the great inventions. With the industrial revolution has come the sharpened individualistic economy characteristic of capitalism and the sharpened class struggle: these by working out their own logic will lead to their opposite, socialism, where—for some reason not fully explained—he supposed the dialectical process would settle down and rest.

If Marx were alive today, he might feel that the course of events in Europe was beginning to prove him right. While the Russian Revolution, he might argue, is the only one that sets up an economic socialism, and does so in his name; the other forms of collectivism, in Germany and Italy, inspired in large part by a fear of the Russian sort of thing, equally indicate the failure of the capitalist individualism, and are themselves only half-way stations on the way to the conclu-

sion dialectically necessary. Many of his followers read the situation in just that way.

Others are inclined to say that the course of events tends rather to vindicate Hegel than Marx. For Hegel also regarded individualism as an "abstraction," and therefore bound to be superseded; but its element of falsity lay partly, in his view, in its giving too much importance to the economic man. The modern state, he argued, shows its immense strength by allowing its members the degree of free action that they have, ascribing rights to them, encouraging them to compete with one another and to regard the property accruing to them from this competition as somehow sacred, and even inviting them to forget the state's existence, as if that were the best state that governs least. But this, to Hegel, is merely the sort of game we always play when we concentrate attention on one factor of the situation to the exclusion of the rest: it is a concession to our mental limits, not a final truth. The complete truth recognizes that it is the state which grants these liberties, and which is justified in doing so only so long as it maintains its own inner power and unity. The individual is one pole of the social process; the community is the other pole: the state includes them both, and when the individual

forgets that he is merely an abstraction, the state will resume its self-assertion. This, think the Hegelians, is what is happening today.

For our part, we are impressed by the fact that these various contemporary movements toward social unity show no resemblance to the dialectical process proposed by either Hegel or Marx. The Russian Revolution, which is the only one from which Marx ought to derive much comfort, takes place not in a great industrial country, but in a vast rural civilization. Its immediate object of attack was not a keen, driving capitalism, undermined by class struggle in which the rich had been getting richer and the poor poorer; but a rather stupid and venal union of church and state, which had begun—too late and too slow, to be sure—to make things better for the peasantry. Nor would Hegel be much better satisfied, either here or elsewhere. For a true dialectical process, in his view, must run slow and deep; its motives lie below the surface of most and perhaps of all contemporary minds; it is only the great minds which here and there catch a glimpse of the over-arching rational necessity of the change. Instead of this, what we seem to witness is a series of sudden revulsions in which shallow analyses are aided by impatience, or perhaps we should

say, in which impatience is rationalized by superficial analyses. It is the tragedy of contemporary history that its rapid rate of change gives a premium to impressionistic thinking and to fashions in action: it is motivated by impulsive swings away from "our present discontents" not by deep-felt verdicts of long experience. Any judgment which takes the form, "The old regime has failed, away with it" stamps itself at once as the product of petulance, not of the dialectic of history: for the dialectic, there is no complete failure of any historic principle.

It is therefore important for us, as for all college men and women of this generation, to give renewed attention to this idea of an historical dialectic. In the form given to it by Hegel, it was regarded as a buried dogma a generation ago, imposing an artificial scheme on the fluid, unpredictable course of free historical action. Bergson rejected Hegel out of hand on that account and regarded it as a weakness of his friend Croce that he held this element of the Hegelian system one of its living parts: "There can be," he said, "no dialectic of history." Yet the presence of freedom in history does not exclude the presence also of law. And the whole conception presents

itself to us today with a renewed demand for careful consideration. For dialectic, I repeat, is not forcing an *a priori* mold upon the facts, or need not be: it is an appeal to thought-filled experience rather than to blind groping; it is consecutive induction.

If there is any dialectic in the destiny of the liberal principle, we shall find it at work in the best or culminating expression of that type of thought. I shall therefore invite your attention to one aspect of the thought of John Stuart Mill, namely, his masterly and widely effective plea for freedom of thought and expression. No one formulated the philosophy of Liberalism with greater insight and sympathy; no one felt more confident that the ideals expressed in his *Political Economy*, his *Representative Government*, his great essay *On Liberty*, were moving toward realization. Yet his younger contemporary, Herbert Spencer, was already aware of the reverse currents in the undertow, and wrote one of his most vigorous pamphlets on *The Coming Slavery*, as he described the socialistic principle. Mill appears to us today as a thinker of fine mold, standing on the edge of a turn in the lane of history, and sublimely unaware not only of what was happening, but of the fact that he bore the seeds of that change in himself.

a. Mill's Argument for Liberty of Thought and Discussion.

YOU will pardon me if I remind you briefly of the familiar doctrine of Mill on individual liberty. His thought has by no means lost present pertinence, as the teaching profession has reason to recall. He believed that men should be free to live their lives each in his own way, with but one restriction, that neither this freedom nor its consequences should encroach upon the interests of others. Particularly important he felt it to be that a man should be free to speak his mind and to argue for his opinions. There were, as you recall, three main reasons for this plea.

First, if society allows itself to display the natural hostility we all feel toward divergent ideas by suppressing their utterance or penalizing it, we are likely to lose important new truth. Mill is willing to concede that as a matter of statistics most new ideas may be bad; but among the new ideas there are some good ones, and they will provoke the usual antagonism toward the unusual and unorthodox, somewhat in proportion to their importance. Discussion itself is the sifting process through which, normally, the wilder and more foolish variants among proposed ideas are

killed off, and the more promising ones are handed on to the later stages of the tourney. Society therefore may safely intrust the elimination of "dangerous thought" to this normal struggle for survival; and unless it does so, it cuts itself off from those occasional new thoughts which are the rarest and the most important agency of progress.

In the second place, suppose that we are in the happy position in which we like to fancy ourselves, of being in possession of the truth, as far as humanity can have it. Under such circumstances, the first argument loses its point. But if this possessed and final truth is no longer challenged, doubted, denied, and then defended, it begins by degrees to lead a somnolent and semiconscious existence, until it becomes "just one prejudice the more." We lose our own perception of its reasons; it forfeits the character of an understood truth; it reverts to subconsciousness. Hence one who seriously challenges a truth, though under the premises his challenge is based on error, is doing that truth at least the service of revivifying its foundations, and so reinstating its meaning in consciousness. On this ground alone dissenters are rather to be encouraged than repressed.

Third, systematic repression of the utter-

ance of opinion tends to ruin one of the most important assets of the community—moral courage. For though the temper of dissent may often seem rather impertinent, conceited, and destructive than courageous, there is in the willingness to oppose an established attitude of society at least a glint of the true metal without which all social life and conversation run off into a murk of tepid conformity and yes-saying.

Mill's recommendation, then, is simply, *No penalty* for opinion and opinion-spreading, no matter how outrageous the opinion may appear to us to be. By this he means to exclude all legal punishments as a matter of course; but he is thinking primarily of social punishments—exclusions, ostracisms, boycotts, loss of repute and standing. In his view there should be not only no rack, no torture, no inquisition, but also no social anger against dissent, no unfriendliness, no deprivation of patronage, no avoidance, no looks askance—complete freedom and welcome for the living thinker, no matter who he is nor what he thinks. In brief, he conceived a society in which everybody felt free to speak his mind on all points at all times, and in which nobody molested anybody for doing so, nor put him to any sort of disadvantage.

As we contemplate the ideal of such a society we are struck with a certain wonder that Mill should have regarded it as a condition under which moral courage would be developed! Since we would have here a perfect example of a costless privilege, it would seem that every occasion for moral courage had been removed, and the development of moral courage therefore rendered impossible. Where there can be no danger, there can be no courage.

But aside from this, think of the staggering price society would have to pay for such a situation. No idea, false or true, could be permitted to attain social or political power; i.e., no idea could be allowed to "prevail" as a guide to common practice. For whatever idea takes hold of human behavior *ipso facto* places all contrary ideas at a definite disadvantage. To believe an idea is to begin to form habits about it; and when habits have become established it is far more difficult to unseat the original idea than when it was in the position of pure theory, with its pro and con on equal footing. Social habits involve a greater momentum than individual habits; the outs have a correspondingly greater disadvantage of position relative to the ins. And those who hold to the outview have to suffer

the natural incidents of this disadvantage, the least of which is that they have to work harder for a hearing.

Suppose, then, that to avoid this painful consequence, we prevent ideas from having any effect on behavior, gaining any social power, making any general difference: ideas become first unimportant, then meaningless, and truth being eviscerated is no longer worth getting: your realm of costless toleration is a realm of devaluated truth. So far from favoring the growth of knowledge, it promises a condition in which no one cares enough about ideas to put its new increments together into a working whole; the truth-thinking, truth-announcing business loses its romance and acclaim, and becomes like a sea of incandescent jellyfish at night—a million vague luminosities and no general light.

The normal destiny of an idea is to come to some sort of power. Our interest in discovery lies partly in the fact that truth ought to be a principle of social order; or to put it the other way around, our social order has a natural hunger for the truth which it can incorporate, and to incorporate a better truth is to dislodge a poorer. It is always possible to keep applications out of sight, indeed, for the most part they ought to be in the back-

ground of consciousness: the active meanings of ideas can add themselves to the theoretical meanings, so long as the channels remain open. But close the channels, and thought becomes a higher form of play. And since it suits the average man only too well not to think, and still more not to have to act according to any hard-won thought, Mill's ideal state would have a Chinese sort of stability, a purely literary culture, a contraceptive order avoiding all the pains of travail and milling around in the same political spot forever. Mill's saving of pain to the thinker is the Western counterpart of "saving the face": the rule, No thinker shall suffer for his thought, is equivalent to the rule, Nothing important shall ever happen.

The right of freedom of speech ought to be a right to the facilities for winning the ear of men in an uphill fight, in the face of public disapproval. The acceptance of that disapproval and its consequences is the occasion for moral courage and a token of sincerity, further a certain insurance to society that the speaker has soberly weighed his thought. Spinoza was excluded from the synagogue; and so he should have been—he did not belong there. He should have been deprived of any position which implied a belief he did not

possess. So far, the social penalty for his unorthodoxy was normal.

But it did not stop there. It proceeded to those excesses which have provoked the counterexcesses of Mill's theory. It tried to cut him off from intercourse and from all livelihood within the Jewish community. The effect of this was to deprive him of his power to persuade within that community, and to throw him back upon the slower, quieter, and more impersonal influence of speculative thinking. Through this excess punishment, the Jewish community shielded itself from disturbance and the possible fascinations of falsehood, but also from stimulus and the possibilities of a leap of life. In this excess, it was wrong to Spinoza and to itself. But had Spinoza been given the choice, I do not doubt that he would have preferred to live when he did, rather than in our day when he would be tolerated everywhere and probably ignored. For in that intolerant time, truth was at least given a rating of high importance; whereas indifference to what is rare and difficult, an evaporation of the emotional significance of truth, is one of the symptomatic traits of our contemporary Liberalism.

Our principle, then, is not one of "No

penalty” but one of “Relevant penalty” as against “Irrelevant penalty.” The deviator ought to suffer and ought to expect to suffer; but his suffering should be such as to leave him all the means to make his case good. The right of freedom of speech does not consist in the privilege of saying anything I please without exciting any reaction. It consists in the right, and the duty, to express what I have seriously and responsibly thought, and to take the consequences of that statement. If I come to the conclusion that there is no God, I ought to be permitted to state and to argue for my atheism; but certainly not to remain within a church whose chief function is to maintain the worship of God; nor can I insist on the right to preach atheism in the primary schools. If I become convinced of the public importance of nudism or polygamy, I should have the privilege of speaking to this effect; but I have no right to demand a hearing from those who do not care to listen, nor a continued reception in the society of those who regard the prevailing manners as signs of a right mind. Ostracism is one of the things which I ought to be prepared to face without complaint.

Suppose I believe in communism, and in the value of a revolution by force for setting up

the new order. I have no manner of complaint if the country protects itself against any actual revolution I may start. And if the country is so far disturbed that a talk revolution tends to become an actual revolution, it is justified in treating the talk as an incipient deed. But supposing the country to be in an ordinary state of self-possession, I should be encouraged to state my belief and my reasons for it to audiences who are disposed and able to think the thing through from first principles. I have no place in the public schools. In fact, if any man professes to believe that we should have a revolution and does anything else except prepare men's minds for that event, he convicts himself of insincerity. For if a man is dissatisfied with the political constitution under which he lives, the rectification of that basis of life takes precedence of every other concrete purpose. He cannot do that and teach school!

Suppose, again, that without accepting communism nor believing in revolution I am convinced that the evils which lead the minds of many people in those directions are real evils, and that young men and women of college age ought to begin to think about those evils and the various remedies proposed in our time, then I should be heard not only in

public but especially within the colleges and universities of the country, which are committed to the wide exploration of social forms and philosophies. In no other way can new and radical proposals receive that complete aeration which they require; in no other way can they be honorably met or, indeed, be met at all since the only answer to a false theory is a true theory. The college is therefore precisely the place in which such views as communism presents ought to be known and discussed. The primary and secondary schools are the places for the conveying of prevailing tradition, together with the reasons which have supported it: the college age is the age for philosophical inquiry, and for the recognition of the problematic and unfinished aspects of our civilization. Propaganda and inflamed exhortation have no place there; but the man who can present steadily, fairly, and without fear all the facts and experiments of the contemporary world (including the facts of propaganda and inflamed speech) within the frame of a reflective and earnest judgment is a man of the greatest value for any university. The government which cannot honor the freedom of speech of such a man in such a place displays an unworthy evasion and acts to its own hurt. There is a world of

difference between such teaching, and the teaching of revolution and discontent to children. Society is wholly within its right in suppressing this latter sort of abuse; it has only to beware lest the mere fact of a political inquisition bring it into worse evils.

b. The Illiberal Basis of Mill's Plea for Liberty.

So far, I have pointed out that Mill's unduly amiable attitude toward every spouter of deviation robs the truth-getting business of its proper virility, and ignores the normal destiny of truth to social power. But there is a more serious defect in his argument, from the point of view of the individual and his rights, namely, that the basis of his argument is treasonable to these interests.

The original basis of individualism, as we saw, was that the individual man as such has rights. These rights are addressed to any conscious agency that may affect them, whether the fellow man or society or the state itself. Thus, in this view, my property is mine, as against the casual thief, or a trespassing neighbor, but also against an irresponsible monarch. Magna Charta is much occupied with the ways in which the royal power may and may not dip into private pockets. There

were things which society, whether for its convenience or its welfare, could not right-fully do.

Now the basis of Mill's entire plea is not the inherent right, but the social utility. This is his principle. He very seldom uses the word "right"—I believe it occurs once or twice in the text of the essay on Liberty, but as it were inadvertently; for the whole point of the argument is not that intolerance infringes a right but that society is likely to lose by it. On this ground, the moment it can be shown that society stands to gain by intolerance Mill can have no word to say in behalf of liberty.

Once adopt this standard of measure, namely, that the individual has no rights in the literal sense of the word, but may have such privileges as are consistent with the public welfare, one is but a step away from the question, Who is to decide what is consistent with public welfare? And then we are at the door of Leviathan and Mussolini.

Thus we see in Mill the strange spectacle of a collectivist, in respect to method, arguing for individualism; the precise counterpart of Hobbes, an individualist in method arguing for collectivism. Neither could reach other than a pseudo-result. Mill, in particular, had

abandoned the philosophical basis on which alone the type of Liberalism he recommended could stand. His sympathies were there—he was a great and liberal soul; but he was also one of the third or fourth generation of Liberals in whom the utilitarian method had dimmed the former sense of principle, while a certain gentility of existence had veiled from him the actual conditions of the life of the British workman, and a scholarly bent to generalities had obscured the sense of those very particulars, which as an empiricist he needed in his system. The glaze of totality is over his eyes; he does not see the individual subject, perceiving and thinking; nor does he feel the movement of history about him as a great argument in which the thinker fights, suffers, creates. In all of these respects he stands in sharp contrast with a contemporary thinker, whose stormy life oscillated between England and the Continent, and who has done much to make the history whose tug he felt and whose dialectic he attempted to interpret.

c. The Marxian View of History.

KARL MARX, most of whose active life was spent as a refugee in France, Holland and England, knew well in his own person, as Mill never knew, the hard lot of the unpopu-

lar idea; yet he made no plea for costless toleration. He saw struggle as an aspect of life, a necessary aspect: and sharing something of Spinoza's intellectual reconciliation to what has to be, preached the class war without complaint of its incidental rigors and social ignominies.

In the year when Mill issued his *Political Economy* (1848), a bible of economic individualism, Marx and Engels brought out their Communist Manifesto. Eleven years later, when Mill published his work *On Liberty*, in which social conflict over ideas is deprecated and history seems lulled to sleep, Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, with its note of struggle for existence as a method of biological advance, and Marx his *Critique of Political Economy* with its note of economic struggle as a method of dialectical advance. Surrounded by the economic fruits of Liberalism in the shape of a growing volume and intensity of private interest, Marx foresaw its dialectical reversal to an intensity of commonwealth and a reassertion of the lost wholeness of society.

The synchronism of the work of Mill and Marx is as striking as its contrast of direction; and so far as the sense for the forces of social change is concerned, we should have to

judge Marx, in view of present facts, a truer prophet than Mill and the deeper man. And upon the truth of one of his major judgments, there will be little difference of opinion. Capitalism, he thought, has solved the problem of production; it has not solved the problem of distribution. Mill would have said that if by the problem of distribution we mean *equitable* distribution, that problem will be worked out in due time but is not of first rate importance, because for society as a whole security of property is more important than any exact system of apportionment. Hegel had said something of the same sort, namely, that while it is of vast importance that everybody have property, it is of little importance *how much* property one has—philosophy has little interest in mere matters of quantity! Marx recognized the shallowness of this complacency, seeing that the quantity of property a man has is of fundamental importance, especially toward the lower end of the scale of incomes; that a difference of quantity may well make the difference between freedom and no freedom, between personal development and the stunting of all distinctively human life; and that, for these reasons, the problem of distribution could not be deferred. But in his view, it could not be met under the pres-

ent system. It is here that his reading of the dialectic of history concerns us.

Modern man had been living under the system of manufacture, which displaced the system of gild handcraft and landed property, by introducing a better division of labor and releasing new productive forces. In this system, in which we were seeing the arrival of the economic individual, Marx sees rather the arrival of an economic class, *the bourgeois*. What we have thought of as its individualism, with its trust in reason, Marx thinks of rather as a class trait, allied to biological energy, a self-seeking enterprise, which is bound in the nature of the case to work out its own principle to its limit, and in so doing to prepare its own death.

This working-out, as he sees it, has led naturally to large scale industry, with an increasing mastery of mechanical power. Through its very scale, big industry begins to wipe out the early traits of individualistic (bourgeois) production, introduce a new psychology, create new problems. It brings about "on the one hand an ever increasing proletarianization of the great mass of the people, and on the other hand an ever greater mass of unsaleable products. . . . Overproduction

and Mass Misery, each the cause of the other, —that is the absurd contradiction which is its outcome,” and which of necessity calls for a new method of economy. This picture of a superabundant production, stuffed warehouses, and a hungry populace, unable to buy what had been produced by their own hands, dependent on a subsistence wage and uncertain of that—this picture familiar to us today as the outstanding puzzle of our economic order, and long ago stamped out in letters of passionate force by Thomas Carlyle, was the picture which Marx in the 50’s was seizing upon as the fatal criticism of our order. He felt that the dialectic of history required things to get worse before they could get better by the complete overturn of the social pyramid, placing the proletariat in corporate control.

Let us compare the diagnosis which leads Marx to this result with our own diagnosis.

On the point of the unity of society, Marx feels the need of it, but does not regard it as a characteristic defect of the bourgeois system. His appeal to the proletariat is, “Workmen of the world, unite”; and to achieve this first condition of success he attempts by every method to strengthen class consciousness,

which implies a curbing of individual self-assertiveness. But he assumed that Capital and the entity we have called Business are already well united and trending toward the greater unities of large-scale production as a part of the automatic drift of the dialectic—an assumption which our own observation does not support. It is true that immense aggregates of capital are the order of the day, bearing a rough proportion to the dimensions of the undertakings attempted, and the number and variety of labor organized in such undertakings. But it is also true that the relations between these aggregates, frequently competitive or partly competitive, are difficult to describe by the term “unity,” or even “harmony”! They reveal, only on a larger scale, the essential individualism and divisiveness of the economic motive in its purity. Nor can we say that Marx’s hope of attaining an ultimate unity of society through the medium of class war shows a deep perspicacity regarding the problem of unity.

On the point of rights and duties, the sense of dialectical necessity in things renders Marx even more silent than Mill. But the ethical basis of his movement, cloaked under the disguise of economic determinism, is his judgment that the wealth of the world is

produced by the workers, is in this sense *earned*, and is their right! Duty has preceded right in this case. And since in the ideal society there are to be no idlers, there are to be no costless rights. His complaint that the problem of distribution has not been solved indicates that right-without-enough-duty is to him also a central defect of the individualist scheme.

We should have to say, however, that Marx has little interest for the general problem of rights-and-duties; his philosophy allows him to concentrate almost exclusively on the economic aspect of things. He believes too easily that all the interests of personality will take care of themselves, once the economic problem is solved. On this point he is radically mistaken: one might go so far as to say that concentration on the economic problem is likely actually to prevent the solution of that problem itself, which in our time is primarily ethical. The justification for the single-mindedness of Marx was the prevalent neglect of the economic factor, especially in the top-lofty idealism of the Hegelians; his great contribution to the philosophy of society was his thoroughgoing redressal of that neglect; it is not surprising that he fell into the opposite one-sidedness.

It would be quite possible, however, to carry Marx's critique a step beyond Marx, and on the same analogy. We might say that individualism has solved the problem of producing men, but has not learned how to distribute them into the common life. The Liberalism of "private rights" (with the muted rumor of duties far away) has produced in this country an admirable race of men; a rural population without a peasantry; an industrial population without a proletariat. I say this with deliberate defiance of those who import irrelevant European population analyses to this land; forgetting that such a term as "proletariat" is a psychological term as well as a term of relative income, and that proletarian psychology does not exist in America. Of what other nation can these things be said? This same regime has produced the men of Business, men of ability and magnitude and of not a little magnanimity, a breed to be proud of. And yet if one asks of these rugged individuals as a class whether they are wholly satisfactory as a human type; and if not, what is the matter with them; one would have to admit that they tend to come to a dead end, not knowing how to branch out into the community. There they are, handsome torsos of humanity, stuck around in

well-built private estates on the edges of a thousand cities; too many of them with nothing important to do but to enjoy themselves, their wealth, their self-esteem; devoid of mission and therefore of moral dignity; helplessly dismayed at what is becoming of their children on whom they have lavished every care, sometimes including their own, and for whom they have purchased the most scientific models of education! The American individual, whether workingman or employer, capitalist or noncapitalist, is as good a product as the planet can show; he is not as a type mean nor greedy, callous nor ruthless; he takes pride in service, and if he is a business man, in the service connected with his business; he is imaginative (to start with) and sympathetic, and has a liberal sentiment toward the world at large; he has an instinctive sportsmanship; is strong in emergency; is the best giver the world has yet known. The picture of the employing class conventionalized by purveyors of the class war is a caricature which only distance and an artificially cultivated rancor make possible. But *he* is responsible for the distance, and as a rule he does not know his responsibility. He has defined his success, and his service, and having attained them he is finished: he is not dis-

tributed into the common life, either in his activity or in his thought.

On the third point of our diagnosis, that of emotional defect, we find a similar partial agreement with Marx. After the sentimental wash of unredeemed benevolence proper to the Liberal writers, the hard pugnacities of the Marxians afford a momentary relief. The missing salt is here in quantity. One is no longer dodging the actualities of conflict, want, clashing-interests under agreeing-interests; one is no longer put off by polite reticences; one is initiated into a more virile psychology, and into a sociology rich in its vein of realism. To some minds, this emotional flavor once felt renders all other outlooks insipid. Yet, as a sole diet, brine is meager, and pretends more realism than it has. The basic emotion of any stable system must be positive. In Marx, it is the felt and sought solidarity of the workers, essentially liberal in quality. His pugnacity is attained by drawing about this group—and in the Bolshevik regime about a much smaller group—the skin of a partisan exclusion, and by defining its relation to the outside portion of the community in the simple term, war. There is an emotional gain in simplification;

a sensible strategic advantage. But no emotion can last which is so consciously canalized at the expense of truth. The emotional quality of the socialist movement has rightly excited the admiration of mankind; it has tended to the level of a humane religion. But alike with the Liberalism it eschews with just disrelish, it falls short of attainable realism.

d. Mill and Marx as Thesis and Antithesis.

THE two thinkers whose work has now come before us instituted no comparisons between themselves, even if they knew of one another's existence. The instructive contrasts were there, but were latent, and are only now becoming significant to us some seventy-five years afterward. Let us bring them together in summary form.

The most striking contrast is that of the optimism of Mill and the pessimism of Marx with regard to the immediate social passage. It is optimism which allows a thinker to become as nearly unconscious of historical movement as Mill was. He felt that on the whole stability and security had been achieved and could be kept; he was willing to contemplate that government should now and then step out of its *laissez faire* role in order to help the weaker party to the wage bargain.

With these occasional aids, the individual forces of society would normally tend to work out the welfare of the social whole. To Marx, these individual forces had already set up an unbearable strain, a situation the reverse of stable, and were steadily bringing things to a worse pass of inequality and suffering. It was not a situation which reason could remedy. The thoughts of men, not free, but molded by class interest and economic necessity, were to be a part of the equipment by which this process should be carried to the point of overturn. These thoughts must be the thoughts of fighters, who must add to the pain of the economic stress these other evils of class hatred, class warfare, class subjugation. Beyond these evils, an eventual happy state, perhaps; though even here man's so-called higher nature remains the creature of his material situation.

We have pointed out the inconsistency of Mill in supporting an individualist scheme of society for the sake of the collective good. Marx has the reverse inconsistency; arguing for a collectivist scheme of society for the sake of individual good. We have said that the central point of Marx's economic attack is the matter of distribution; but this word "distribution" betrays the motive as divergent from

that of the socialist. Distribution is the process of getting the social product into the hands of you and me, the consumers; and we are individuals. It is this sense of the individual workman and his lot—a sense that Mill never enjoyed—which constitutes, as I think, the real strength of Marx's writing. When the workingman reads his Marx, he feels that he reads a man who not only knows his situation, and has his personal interest at heart, but who is actually "one of us," an illusion from the biographical point of view, but true enough in motivation. To Marx, the social collectivity is after all merely a means to the end of the individual liver. His inconsistency is thus the precise complement of Mill's inconsistency.

And now, as so often happens in contrasts of this kind, both types of policy reach the same result in one respect: both, if given free and exclusive rein, would involve the ruin of the individual personality.

How Liberalism, as a welfare philosophy, produces men who find the meaning of life where they have been taught to find it, namely, in a sum of personal satisfactions, and having gained these are at a loss for anything more to do—this we have already seen. Many of these individuals find something to lend fur-

ther meaning to their existence; and this is to their credit, they were not helped to it by the ideal of "greatest happiness to greatest number!" Others rest in their rights to enjoy, lusty sunflowers, well grown, devoid of fragrance, neighbors to the weeds.

But the socialism of Marx aims consciously at the same result, only for a different group of individuals. The whole purport of the social process, as conceived by Marx, is the social dividend for the benefit of the workers. The human member of this process is taught to think of himself as a determined function of the economic mill-of-the-gods, these dialectical overruling laws being the ultimate Bourgeoisie of the Universe! The flower of Mill's philosophy is the economic gentleman, independent and freethinking; the flower of Marx's philosophy is the economic workman, dependent and unfreethinking. Both as pictures of the complete man are human failures.

In this result we come on the trail, I believe, of the true dialectic of history. This dialectic is not, as Marx thought, a paradoxically intelligent result of nonintelligent forces. Nor is it as Hegel thought a pure and superhuman logical necessity. It is the slow consensus of freely thinking and groping human minds, as they perceive the inadequacy

of the thoughts which have been guiding them, and turn toward something better. Ideas contain action as the valley walls contain the stream. Great ideas are like the reservoirs created by mountain barriers, over which the waters find no outlet, though they seek through a thousand diverging ravines. There is no automatic motion onward. There is no leap ahead until at some level a breach appears in that barrier; then all the waters conspire to enlarge it and to enter the next valley. Thus a dialectical turn in history can only come on those rare occasions when men reach a common feeling of confinement within categories that have appeared final, and an equally general intuition of a way to move beyond them. It waits the arrival in human heads of a truer idea.

Whatever this new idea may be, it will not cancel the insights of Mill or of Marx over against each other; but will preserve much of each, including something of that reference to social wholeness which guided Mill, and something of that subconscious individualism of Marx. But it will have to present us an individual more complete than either had in view. This individual will have a moral quality which is not a mere derivative either of the social relations in which he stands or of his

economic situation; and while having some properties of the self-sufficient being, he will have also what I venture to call a "joining function," which implies a need for something beyond himself.

This notion of a joining function may save us from the idea of a prior "social organism" in which the individual is embedded as a cell in a body, and at the same time submerged and lost. It is this "organic" conception, present in Aristotle and Hegel, which has hitherto been the chief alternative to the theory of abstract individualism. But I stand on the view that there *is no prior social organism*: there is an organism to be built, to be built by individuals endowed with the joining function. Let me conclude this chapter by a suggestion of what this strange phrase may mean.

I may illustrate this idea by an older conception of the chemical atom, once supposed to be an unchangeable ingredient of the universe. Each atom had a kind of self-sufficiency, in the sense that it could never be destroyed. But it also had its habits of combining with other atoms; and each kind of atom has its own invariant capacity for such combination. Some could take on two atoms of hydrogen as

partners in a molecule, some one atom, some four, and so on. This uniting capacity was called the "valence" of the atom. When an atom had become disjoined from a given molecule, its "valence" might be regarded as a seeking activity, as if a definite number of hooks or hands were reaching out into the neighboring region for other unoccupied valences. It has a latent joining capacity.

Now the human individual, like this imaginary atom, can exist apart from other individuals: but he has a joining function, which makes him not alone capable of social life but desirous of it. In this joining function we may discern such elements as the law of "reason" which each man assumes to be the same as the reason of his neighbor. He is therefore able to coöperate with his neighbor in everything making use of logic, mathematics, science. We may also see an idea of the good, which—underneath all divergencies of taste and preference—each individual assumes to be in fundamental agreement with that of each other individual. Because of this agreement, ideas of right can be set side by side, compared and discussed; working systems of law can be set up and active enterprises involving the morals of satisfied coöperation can be carried through.

Since these common systems of thought and value are valid not only for contemporaries, but also between different periods of time, they have a character more enduring than the individuals who employ them; and they are therefore sometimes erroneously regarded as "eternal objects" existing or subsisting out of time. They are, however, but parts of the constitution of this joining power; which has in it other qualities and impulses into which we need not now enter. But because of this joining function, each individual is not merely "I-thinking" but also "We-thinking"; he uses the first person plural, the simplest name of a unitary society, as easily as he uses the word, I. Man is not by nature a solipsist, confined to his own consciousness and his own interests; he is by nature an active agent in an active world, and a personal agent in a world of persons and things. In all his economy, his hunting, his animal husbandry, his road and bridge building, his mining and manufacturing, his invention of systems of science, industry, finance, security—the entire economic structure of his mastery of nature—he is still the being whose prime interests are in that region of reason and value which make him capable of society.

The entity we call the state is the spon-

taneous unity of these joining functions, a unity formed, as a rule, about something-to-do in the world of concrete activity. This state does not pre-exist, and we are not here to serve it. But it exists because we first exist, and because its existence may enable us to be more completely ourselves. The individual apart from his joining function, purely as economic man, cannot create a social whole; the individual with his joining function may do so. Here we have the paradox of social structure; and we have now to develop in detail the solution to which this conception may lead us.

CHAPTER IV

TWO NECESSITIES OF FUTURE SOCIETIES

ONCE knew a building contractor, an old rascal who learned his trade as he said “by getting into scrapes and having to get out of them.” He attempted at one time to put up a building in steel and concrete with no other instruction than seeing others do it and asking questions. He achieved stability, but the building was odd at the joints and notably ill-proportioned—a liability upon his reputation.

Now the building art is one of the products of human genius, hence always within the reach of human ability. But history, though we throw into it a certain structure by means of these artifacts we call states, is always so far beyond human analysis that what we call our experiments have rather the character of the old builder’s “scrapes.” Our Liberal institutions are to an extent experiments; they are also “scrapes,” whose correction we have to devise as we go along.

For this reason, the idea of a “dialectic” in history, as a rational movement from one

working hypothesis to another, seems somewhat strained. Experimental rectification, mending leaks as they show themselves, pragmatic patchwork, seems a more modest and a more accurate account of the course of things. Nevertheless, in the larger turns of historic change we may see, looking over the long distance, an instinct for direction which amounts to a deep-lying rationality. In the course of ages, a few things are learned, and remain learned, because they are seen to be necessary, and not the mere makeshifts appropriate to the contemporary "scrape."

Of such a character, I believe, is the present general movement toward a more satisfactory social unity. It seems to me to have the true dialectical quality of an argument to which the deficiencies of the older Liberalism have led, and from which we may be justified in deriving some of the necessary elements of every future social order. To say that the social whole is bound to reassert itself can hardly qualify as prophecy, in view of what is happening all around us. The element of prophecy lies solely in answer to the insistent question whether the drift toward centralized authority is a temporary palliative for a passing disorder, or a new stage which will remain. We are prepared by our analysis, and by our

reading of Mill and Marx, to take the latter view. Dictatorships are palliatives: they have met momentary needs here and there, but have solved no problem; on the contrary, as we shall see, they have failed to grasp the problem, and have therefore solved nothing. But there is a valid kernel in the various movements at home and abroad toward enabling the central executive to do something, however improvised and bedeviled in their actual form, which is neither first-aid, nor pragmatic groping, but a necessity: something of the sort had to come; and something of the sort will necessarily continue.

The new self-assertion of the social whole naturally takes on first a political character. For the whole-interest has to be *enacted*, not simply thought of; that is, unity is a deed, not a mere sentiment. That numerous I-thinking individuals cannot constitute a social whole we have seen. But neither can numerous We-thinking individuals constitute such a whole, so long as they remain simply thinkers. Unity is an abstraction which can be realized in a thousand diverse concrete ways; but which cannot be realized in general: we may unite in a foray on Panama, or on a tax bill, or on plans for a capital city, but we

cannot simply unite! Hence it is that political unity has to come from a uniting deed—the political assertion of some We-thinking individual or group who can embody the latent “We” of the society or nation. This involves in most liberal states a breach with the tradition of the hampered government; but it is by no means hostile to democracy. It may well be that democracy will for the first time exist, because for the first time a true general will exists and finds its way into action, or rather, gains real existence by finding its way into action.

This I should like to put forward as the first necessity for future societies—that the will to exist must take the form of the will to act; there can be no united state except an active state, united in action. I ask leave to refer to this principle as the commotive principle—“commotive” being one of the very few new words I shall venture to inflict upon you, for the sake of simplicity and emphasis—and I propose that we consider in some detail the meaning and scope of the commotive function.

a. The Commotive Function.

THE word “commotive” means nothing else than “moving together.” The commotive func-

tion is that function which enables, and leads, a group of men to move together in the achievement of a common purpose. It is quite possible for men to be animated by a common purpose and yet to be unable to act together, like a group of mountain climbers without guide or plan, or a group of musicians who have no way of deciding what to play! They require some one to exercise the commotive function, propose a particular program and win assent to it. This is not the same as what we commonly call the "executive function"; for the executive is supposed to carry out what is already decided, and in general to carry on. But the commotive function precedes this; it is the activity in which the group's mind is first *made up*, or even earlier, the activity in which the group is itself made up and recognizes itself as a group.

Let me illustrate. Suppose we believe that something needs to be done in the way of South Polar Exploration; a number of scattered individuals have had such a notion. Now if we happen to be Richard Byrd, we find these scattered individuals, make them known to one another, secure agreement in a plan of action, raise some money, assemble a crew, and start an expedition. This is the commotive activity; the unity of this small common-

wealth is made by the common purpose plus the common plan actually worked out.

Once started, such an expedition finds a thousand questions to be answered and decisions to be made. There is work of an executive order to be parceled out among a list of officers, and there is work of a judicial order, adjustments to make, disputes to settle. The judicial labor commonly harks back to the chief commotive officer in such an undertaking, because he, having got the expedition up, remains responsible for its "morale"; and the morale of the group is simply the continuance of its original commotive impulse, the conception which enabled them to move together, and with an initial enthusiasm, which is always wearing out and has always to be renewed. This continued commotive function, requiring the sustention of morals, is the heaviest burden on any responsible head; the executive and judicial burdens, grave as they may be, do not compare with it. They remain incidental to the labor of keeping wills united, for unity does not stay achieved, it has perpetually to be reinstated.

The *laissez faire* theory was inclined to give the chief place in the state to the legislative and judicial functions, and to trim the

executive function to the minimum compatible with order. The state as a whole had no proper commotive function, that is to say, it had nothing of its particular own to do, since the initiative for all action was to come from its members, and it had only to reduce friction and umpire the game. In my view, the blind spot of the Liberal conception of politics is just in this absence of perception of the commotive function as an essential for the large group as well as for such small groups as we have chosen for illustration. And it is this discovery, rather than the ancient device of autocratic concentration of power, which marks the point of vitality in some of the European adventures.

For the new dictatorships in Europe and Asia differ from the conventional model in one important respect: they have a program of action for the state as a whole which is their primary excuse for existence; they use every effort to keep that program in the focus of public interest, and study every means to be or become "popular" governments. They recognize the necessity of being the salesman of their own works of imagination.

No one who shared a faint hope that an ingredient of the liberal spirit might enter

international affairs after the great war can consider without moral loathing the external policies of Japan and Italy, marked by the hypocritical heroics of the buccaneer and the poisoner. But as a natural science, psychology abstracts from all ethical qualities, and we can see in the total psychological picture of these nations the working of a commotive impulse, which could be invoked for fair ends as well as for foul. Anyone who has passed through Italy in recent years will have felt a new spirit in the land, a new animation, a new discipline—a spirit, manifested in a hundred details, in cleaning up dirty old corners of city streets, in the lessening of beggary and public loafing, in the sprucing up of attitude and carriage, in the order of public places, railroad stations, trains, in the feeling of national being and purpose. To Italians, the word Italy means more than it did: the nation exists as a living and active will.

Consider what is happening in Germany, with whatever reservations one feels called on to make in regard to internal policy. At the time when Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference, there ran through the German people a thrill of national feeling hard for an outsider to understand, even

when one remembers that it was a protest against the continued effort of Europe to force upon Germany the one-sided observance of a disarmament clause of the Versailles Treaty which first France and then other powers had systematically flouted. Certain experiences in Geneva in 1928 had prepared me to some extent for understanding it. I had come to Geneva from Austria: and had seen something of the Saturday and Sunday outings which had replaced for thousands of young Austrians the former military drill and the life of the barracks. One could hardly observe these groups of young men and women, with their *Rucksacks* and sticks, their singing, their stride, their vigor, their athletic purpose and discipline, without thinking how vast the improvement over the whole psychology and effect of military service. Finding a number of young Germans in Geneva, liberal in politics and internationally minded, I passed on to them this reflection, and found a surprising absence of response. They were depressed rather than elated; they held that Germany needed an army. But why? Because in the present state of Europe a nation without an army could not speak with effect, on the basis of pure reason and justice. I re-

called one of the qualifications required for a chief in Anglo-Saxon days: he must "be able to speak *and be listened to*." What the young Germans could not endure was the impotence of speech and the impotence of deed of an unarmed power in a world that pretended a wish to govern itself by reason. It was not that they wanted an army; but that they required a national activity and weight in world affairs. Germany's later rejection of the Disarmament Conference was a gesture of self-respect; it brought a recovered sense that Germany exists; it brought a commotive impulse to the nation.

Enough of illustration. The illicit attractiveness of war, programs of national brigandage, revolution, ought to yield on analysis an ingredient which can be put to honest use. The commotive impulse is based on a conceived national *meaning*, in which an active program and a common emotion of assent are inseparable. Reform, of itself, whether political or economic, never brings about a stable new order; there can be no new polity without a new emotion.

The central *malaise* of the older Liberalism lay in this quarter. Its picture of the "general welfare" as a sum of individual enjoyments

gained all its attraction from contrast with existing spots of social misery which a people could join in willing to obliterate. It offered no real and positive general good, because it built no common purpose. Its ideal of a do-nothing state is inconsistent with the idea of a state with a mission in the world. And with a static state, there can be nothing but *static men*! Such men we have seen as its high product, men without a calling, men who can no longer take themselves seriously, men who have succeeded, and in doing so have reached the end of their significance. The failure of the Liberal civilization is at the top, not at the bottom. Contrast the moral condition of such a community with the fierce idealism which flames up here and there among the youth of Russia or of China, to whom the nation itself, with a task which appears glorious in proportion to its difficulty, has become the absorbing business of life. The puff-cheeked bombast of Mussolini, the narrow fanaticism of Hitler, are less attractive, because their national conceptions are still loaded with the primitive goals of bigness and self-importance: "Make Us Mightier Yet"! It is an inferior brand of national purpose. But crude as it is, it is still something—and in this something, superior to the ideal of a state

whose ambition it is to avoid entanglement and to hug in isolation the fragments of a disturbed national prosperity.

We may remark in passing that no commotive impulse is ever built on a purely economic motive, which is essentially competitive. Economy gives rise to a combination and coöperation only when it appears to the intelligent animal that he can secure more by working together than by working apart; it is a truce in the contest; it is a veil for the fundamental egoism which prompts it. In fact, actual coöperation would be impossible to initiate were it not for a pre-existing sociability, under whose cover—commonly dubbed “politeness”—articles of coöperation are drawn up. It is rather the social and ethical interests which draw men together; and it is these which form the substance of the emotions developed by the commotive impulse. To Marx, the whole meaning of history has to be read from the economic quarter; but his own fervor, and the exalted spirit of self-sacrifice often shown by his followers in their effort for the ideal society to be, welled up from unacknowledged springs of human feeling and from a passion for justice as they conceived justice. This ethical passion is the stuff

which must enter into the fabric of any persistent commotive impulse, and hence into any stable social order of the future.

b. The Communist Experiment.

THIS primary demand for future society, that it shall be built upon the law of commotive unity, appears to carry us in the direction of collectivism. And so it does. But not toward a collectivism of either the Fascist or the Communist sort. It will tend to clarity, and to the explanation of our thesis, if we make here a rapid survey of these two devices, indicating what appears valid in their reaction from the headlessness of Liberalism, and what are the fundamental errors in the headiness which has replaced it.

Communism in Russia has the great negative virtue of a successful revolution: it has destroyed ancient abuses. It may be that some of the iniquities and corruptions of the old church-state regimes were so deep-rooted that a complete cleansing of the stables was the least painful way to get rid of them.

It is now put on its mettle to show its positive worth. It has that worth. This worth does not lie in its common wealth, which tends rather to be a common poverty. It certainly does not lie in an increase of liberty. It lies

rather in the fact that for the old static tyranny has been substituted a tyranny which is dynamic, and directed toward certain liberal ends. It has invited the masses to understand and participate in the national effort, and has to this extent released the genius of a greatly gifted people.

It has destroyed the spirit of fatalism, and has spurred its membership collectively to think for itself and assume responsibility for its own destiny. Its hostility to religion is largely due to the mischievous alliance between the prevailing creed and the spirit of *nichivo*, that Russian shrug of the shoulders which defers action and throws the responsibility for fate upon the higher powers. That expression tends to disappear from the psychology of the Russian people. It is not merely that the Russian is allowed to think, he is obliged to think, he is stirred at every point to consider and judge, collectively; because his destiny is now felt to be in his own hands, collectively.

As a development of this dependence on human thought, it has established at the center of government an intense concern for a true philosophy. This is a mark of political sincerity; for when men are sincere they incorporate their philosophy in their deeds—is

not this a definition of sincerity?—and it becomes a matter of vital importance what that philosophy is. When, on the contrary, philosophy is held to be an indifferent matter for the politician, the inference is that he has no sincere intention of bringing his beliefs into his deeds. The “shocking manners,” or, in other words, the awkward frankness of Soviet diplomacy may yet force some of the decencies of Liberalism into the venal currents of international bickering.

But these merits are incidental to the fact of revolution and the new hope it engenders, and to certain ingredients which the new order has in common with the liberal spirit. They do not derive from the specific economy of Communism. And when we examine what that economy contributes to the public morale, we are not reassured.

Too much weight must not rest upon the mere fact of the continued poverty of the Russian masses, so long as it is a hopeful poverty, and one which is being slowly relieved, even while great public enterprises are absorbing the lion's share of the national dividend. It belongs to the present stage of the plan that the dividend should not yet reach the workers in any great measure; for beside

the heavy industries to be built and the great public institutions to be established, there are also enormous military expenses involved in the defense of eastern and western boundaries, and the rapid completion of systems of communication which are required to support the military need as well as to promote the economic division of labor within the Soviet domain. It is a part of the success of the commotive impulse stirred in this people that public developments, dramatic and colossal in scale, compensate so great a multitude for the nonarrival of their personal ship of plenty.

But this type of compensation is not permanent. And if the communization of property, built into the new system, outpaces the communization of the minds that use it, it will carry with it a loss of public morale. No two men can share contentedly the same economic situation unless they are precise duplicates one of another; and if they are precise duplicates, neither of them has a sufficient reason for his own existence. In practice an enforced community of physical living always begins after a time to outrun the moral capacity of the human being for harmony; and the best security for a lasting concord is not the Platonic recipe of "all things in com-

mon," but rather an ample opportunity for privacy and the satisfying of personal whims. Russian life at present seems to present a ubiquitous insistence on the public program, an absence of private relief, an inability to get away from it, which begin to strain even the infinite patience and social hunger of the Russian soul. In view of these things, we are not surprised that Russian experience shows to realistic observers here and there a decline in that public morale which is the life-blood of the new order.

The following words of a critical but intimate and honest observer may be quoted not alone for the psychological facts they record, but also for their analysis of the causes of those states of mind. They are from a letter by Christian Rakovsky, published in *The New International* of November, 1934, as applicable to present conditions, though the letter was written from Astrakhan in 1928.

The Opposition will always retain as one of its merits toward the Party, the fact that at the proper time it sounded the alarm about the frightful decline in the spirit of activity of the working masses and about its ever growing indifference towards the destiny of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet state.

The position of a class fighting for the con-

quest of power and that of a class which holds it in its hands are different. . . . What does a class taking the offensive represent? A maximum of unity and of cohesion. All craft and group, to say nothing of individual interests retire to the background. . . . When a class is in power, one of its sections becomes the agent of this power. Thus the bureaucracy come forward. In a socialist state where capitalist accumulation is forbidden by the members of the ruling party, this differentiation commences by being functional; then it becomes social. . . . The function has modified the organ itself, that is, the psychology of those who are charged with the various tasks of management in the administration and the economy of the state has changed to such a point that not only objectively but subjectively, not only materially but morally, they have ceased to be a part of this same working class. . . .

In other words, what Rakovsky found was that the differentiation into governing and governed, however carefully guarded, brings with it a different degree of mental participation in the business of the state. Communism itself cannot secure in the mass of the workers an equal mental immersion of all in the public business. Rakovsky, as a good Communist, though an exiled member of a "liquidated" Opposition, deplors this, and thinks it due

to the particular ambitions of a particular group, and their failures to educate the newcomers. Perhaps, as a now restored member, he has since reflected that the defect is in the nature of the case. Communism exaggerates the capacity of human nature for community.

At the same time it minimizes the necessity of human nature and of the social order for differentiation. It has to learn that the evils which it attributed to the capitalist system and its bearers are in part such as reappear in its own ranks when the necessary functional differentiations in the working society begin to take form. It is impossible for the manager to retain the psychology of the worker, the more so if he is a good manager; nor can the worker maintain fully the spirit of mental initiative and command which the manager requires. So the bureau man develops a public and responsible cast of mind, whose caricature is the "bureaucrat." And this class psychology of control can be broken up only by depriving the state of continuity in the services of its abler men—for there are such beings! But then, the nonresponsibles tend to slump: there is, as Rakovsky puts it, "arrivisme, selfishness, cowardice" and a general moral decline on whose details there is no need to dwell.

It is clear to all eyes that Communism has not bred a tolerant fraternity within its own ranks. The factional differences signalized by the names Trotzky, Stalin, Bukharin, Molotov, Krestinsky . . . run deeper than do the party differences of the ordinary bourgeois state, which commonly stops short of banishment and death penalties for such deviations from orthodoxy. The terms in which our Communist brethren characterize each other when they differ, the occasional purgings of the Party, their attitude toward the mendicant and pauper classes, or toward the Ukraine recalcitrants, indicate that an enforced sharing of life at the economic level tends to exacerbate rather than relieve the ordinary bitterness of interhuman criticism. Communism does not appear to have solved the problem of public morale.

One point in particular is emphasized by the Russian experiment, namely, that there is no virtue, economic or otherwise, in reversing the personnel of social control, by putting the proletariat in command.

The demand that the whole business of production, and of government with it, be turned over to the workers is a natural one

when one considers the present economic mess. It is mightily reinforced by the reflection that the present impasse of production is largely a *moral impasse*. It reveals the astonishing impotence of the most marvelous of human systems when, thoroughly infected by greed, dishonesty, and irresponsibility in its organs of control, it is confronted by a situation which requires chiefly one thing, mutual confidence. If our mighty men of industry and finance know too much about one another to trust one another, what can emerge but a universal self-created futility, unable to get things into motion? And it is a pleasant theory that the working class would do better.

That the working classes would at first *do better by the working classes* may be taken as a probability; and whether they could set up a better total system of economy would require consideration. But so far as any proposal derives its merit from a shift of *personnel*, it is of a piece with the unrealistic nonsense of the older Liberalism. It assumes that the worker is somehow better than the employer or the capitalist—morally better, and mentally at least as good. No evidence is offered for these views except the Liberal presumption that poverty purifies, that the

under dog must be a particularly good dog, that the position of misfortune or of being near the margin of subsistence or of working with one's hands spiritually qualifies that individual to be a moral and intellectual leader. No one who knows the inner history of labor and its leadership will make any such claims; no sober proletarian retains any such illusion. The experiences we have touched on from Russia are amply illustrated in labor movements in every land, not least in our own.

It stands to reason that no economic condition carries with it moral excellence or the reverse; except that long continued poverty or inhuman hours of toil have an unfavorable effect on both capacity and moral resistance, which is one of the strongest reasons for getting rid of them. There are honest and able men among laborers and among employers; there are crooks on both sides. And except for the love of change or the love of punishment, there is no virtue in substituting one set of crooks for another. The greed of the profiteer is bigger, but not morally worse, than the greed of the man who envies him; and it is appalling how soon the envious one, given a change of circumstances, learns the arts of oppression.

It is hard to see, if we agree with Marx that capitalism has solved the problem of production, why we should expect improvement in this respect by transferring production to other hands. If these other hands are to be at the same time workers and politicians, the proposal seems still less attractive. No one proposes to replace the workers themselves by politicians; and the politician in the role of employer is not more promising than in the role of employee.

Communists incline to believe that "the only consistently progressive class in modern world society is the proletariat." They point out that "only the working class in power has been able to undertake and carry through planning in economic life." And they would like to infer from "the veritable torrent of initiative, resourcefulness, talent released from the midst of the 'dark masses' when the revolution broke down . . . traditional class repression" that "a new Golden Age undreamed of by Pericles is held in store for humanity under communism."*

The release of talent has indeed been noteworthy; the new occasions have found new men. It is probable that, just as there are

* *The New International*, November, 1934. Editorial.

unused energies of individuals, so there are always vast unused human resources of society. It is in the nature of revolution to bring to light much capacity in unsuspected quarters, and to destroy much other capacity. The Russian Revolution has been prolific both ways. What has been demonstrated is what should be well known—that the place occupied by any individual in any society, scrub-woman or banker, is no pure reflection of inherent qualities; but a circumstantial product of the man and the occasion. But the inference would seem to be, not that society is to gain by overturn, but that a normal circulation from the nonprofessional to the professional groups, and *back again*, is better than any fixed class structure.

Democratic Liberalism impedes this circulation by encouraging every man to drift toward the professional end of the spectrum. Communism impedes it by turning the hour-glass upside down and leaving it there forever. Both, in their set purpose to turn the laborer into something else show a subconscious disparagement of labor at the heart of a professed respect for it. There will be no healthful society until the movement from the professional to the nonprofessional activities is as ready as the reverse motion; and until

standards of fitness are applied objectively, and individually, without doctrinaire views as to what classes ought to do.

c. The Fascist Experiment.

FASCIST leadership, like Bolshevik leadership, has brought a large part of the people of a great state into the wake of an active minority. The reality of the commotive impulse we have already noted. In its background we must recall Italy's smoldering sense of injury in the Versailles settlements, which may explain in part the degree to which not alone the nation but the church also could enter into the plans and motives of so conscienceless an international bully as Mussolini. Garibaldi galvanized the youth of Italy under a noble and desperate hope; and elevated those who went with him. Mussolini galvanized a different stratum of youth under a ruthless vision of gain and greatness, and Italy has yet to gather the harvest of this planting. But foreign warfare has done what it always tends to do, bring the nation together in a surge of common emotion, with attendant sacrifice and discipline. And Fascism, from its arrival, put an end to the hopeless politics of a swarm of venal party groups.

This unity is built upon the proposition,

startling in a state of so great pride, that *the masses do not think*. Giovanni Gentile has made a striking statement of "The Philosophic Basis of Fascism," whose argument will repay our attention.*

There is a kind of nationalism which he disparages: the nationalism which supposes that the nation exists first, and the state afterward, the state being the servant, spokesman, and agent of the pre-existing nation. This collective entity, the nation, is often considered as a sort of natural fusion of human individuals who have been melted into "a unity of thought and of conscience"—as Vico puts it—through the long influence of language, customs, domain, religion, history. But if the state interprets this entity, the individual has to accept the result: this sort of nationalism is therefore aristocratic in the sense that what the individual citizen must think and do is handed down to him from above. "The Fascist State, on the contrary, is a people's state, and as such the democratic State *par excellence*."

This may sound like a pleasantry, but it is not so intended. The State exists, Gentile goes on to explain, only in so far as individuals are

* *Foreign Affairs*, January, 1928.

conscious of it; and through this consciousness bring it into existence. How then are individuals to become conscious of the State, and so to give it being? The Fascist Party is to perform this feat. "Hence the need of the Party, and of all the instruments of Propaganda and education which Fascism uses to make the thought and will of the Duce the thought and will of the masses. Hence the enormous task which Fascism sets itself in trying to bring the whole mass of the people, beginning with the little children, into the fold of the Party."

Let us put this situation into other terms. The people are neither a "nation," in the sense of a body of people having a certain mode of thought and feeling which is characteristic and traditional, and which the state has to observe; nor are they a group of individuals who are politically conscious, having an idea of a state, and of what a state ought to be doing. The people do not of themselves think the state; they must be made to think it. The initiative for this thought comes from a single individual, the Duce; from him it is handed down through Party, Propaganda, Education, until it reaches the individual citizens, even the children. They are filled from

this source with the state thought: upon this, the state comes to existence.

It is not strange under these circumstances that the state thought of the people should correspond with the state thought of the Duce; and that what they expect and wish the state to do is precisely what the Duce expects and wishes to do. The state, therefore, does precisely what the people, with unexampled unanimity, desire. And this, of course, is the highest perfection of democracy! The Duce has shouted into the ravines and every hollow gives him back his words. A perfect unity, based upon the hypothesis of the complete vacuity of the Italian mind and conscience!

This does not appear to be the sort of unity we are in search of. It is a unity of thinking beings we desire, not the unity of the drill squad, in which humanity, for a limited time and a limited purpose, has deliberately divested itself of separate intelligence and will. The member of the drill squad returns to his proper personality when the drill is over: the citizen of the Fascist state-theory has no proper personality to return to.

Now it may be, as is sometimes said, that Italy and Germany are not ready for democracy, just because of this prevalent imma-

turity of the individual. Or it may be, as a keen observer has said, that political self-assertion—freedom—is “not a right but a habit.” Maurice Hindus visits Russian colleges, and speaks familiarly with the students. He tells them that he admires what they are doing, but that there is one thing he would find intolerable: “If you think Stalin has made a mistake, you can’t come out and say so out loud.” He receives the answer: “But we do not wish to say so out loud.” If Stalin is willing to take the responsibility, why not allow him to do so? This suggests to Mr. Hindus that there are political tempers whose chief political good is not the overprized liberty-to-differ-and-to-oppose but simply an intelligible program.

Political thinking is, after all, a great deal of trouble, and there are few that do it well, even in the most vigorous democracies. “Perhaps the chief reason for the general reaction against Liberalism—so we let our thoughts run along—is not any breakdown or embarrassment in its working, but plain *fatigue*. The Fascist may be right, only a little more candid than the rest of us: *no* people are ready for democracy, for democracy assumes what is false, that the average man is capable of thinking politically, of thinking the state,

and of having an idea of what the state should do. This Liberal psychology was merely a pious wish." Is this the case?

The chief trouble with this inviting view is that a unity of individuals who do not think ceases to be a unity and tends to become a pure monologue and monodeed. There is a pretense of thought even in the man who only agrees and says Yes. In this mood of lethargy and pessimism we may do worse than revert to the Oriental scene. Here are nations who are not in the habit of thinking politically, except in local affairs; and the efforts of those who might be dictators is to rouse them to positive national thought. For so long as individual citizens are mentally cramped, un-grown, deprived of political, religious, ethical autonomy because incompetent, and therefore never acquiring the beginnings of competence in these fields, there can be no national consciousness and no state. The state is not made by an idea whispered into the ears of dummies by a superman; it is made by an idea born in the minds of each of its citizens.

d. The Second Necessity: the Incompressible Individual.

THE state must be unified; and in its public purposes individual purposes must merge—

this is our first necessity. But they can so merge only when public purposes are prolongations of individual purposes, and derive their life therefrom. The individual thus remains mentally prior to the state; and the principle of every future state must be this: that *every man shall be a whole man*. This is our second necessity. It is the principle upon which political democracy has been based, and which none of the fallacies of parliamentarism have any tendency to destroy.

In spite of the works of his followers, Marx felt this principle. It is his sensitivity to the individual in his need which makes his work so living in appeal to those workmen of the world whose uniting he conceived as no material necessity but a voluntary and moral deed. It was because he felt that every man must be a whole man that his indignation was roused by those deformations of human nature which he saw as an incident of the machine age; he foresaw in the industrial order the development of an industrial pathology. With vast approval he quotes an English writer: "To subdivide a man is to execute him. . . . The subdivision of labour is the execution of a people."* Adam Smith had noticed the fact that "the understandings of

* *Capital*, Vol. I, chap. 14.

man are formed by their ordinary employments," and had observed that machine-tending is likely to make men stupid. He makes the observation with scientific calm. Mill, if he noticed the fact at all, remained politely undisturbed by it. Marx felt the crime of it in every fiber of his being. This is the measure of his greater moral depth, and the secret of his enduring power.

But how could Marx fail to see that his socialized state would even more radically sin against the principle, Every man a whole man? It would remedy the unequal mutilations under industrialism, but at the cost of the equal mutilation of everybody. For the forcibly collectivized life of the communist state as of the fascist state takes the upper inch off from every head, the inch which thinks, aspires, exercises individual judgment, doubts, demurs, and therefore means something when it assents. And it is just this inch, most precious to the individual, which is most precious also to the modern state.

For in the last analysis, the thought and conscience of the individual man are the *only thought and conscience there are*. We talk about the state as if it were a single organism with a mind and will of its own: for the most

part this figure of speech serves well enough, but it is a mere analogy, and at this point it fails. There is, in literal truth, no public mind: there are only the minds of the persons composing the public. There is no public conscience; there are only their several consciences. Dry these functions up, or bind the life out of them, and all the mental and moral life of the public is stopped at its source.

Hence the new and unified state, for its own sake, must limit the scope of its effort at unification. It cannot live in distraction and chronic dissent; neither can it live in a forced assent which is no assent at all. It can assume and enforce assent *to its existence*, and to participation in such measures as define the current experiment in corporate living; but it cannot assume nor enforce unanimity of opinion as to the wisdom or success of these measures. It must submit its experiment from moment to moment to the judgment of free judges, as guide to the next experimental stage.

The dictatorial state attempts to live without the risks of living; but there is no life without risk, whether for man or state, and conversely, what is riskless is lifeless. The state which refuses to risk its own continuance to the free approval of its members

and that means risking their disapproval gets no approval at all, for mechanical conformity is not approval. In making itself mechanically secure, it insures its own mental death. Since the dictatorship there has been no cultural life in Italy, and no philosophy but Echo. And in Russia, the cultural life of theater and of letters makes its way just in proportion as the irrepressible vitality of the Russian soul escapes the themes of economy and political determinism.

Fortunately for man and state, the ultimate inner life is noncollectivizable.

It can be killed, but it cannot be bound. This part is the germinal man, the source of ideas and standards, of imagination and belief. We talk about the freedom of thought as if it were a moot point; but thought can never be anything else than free, it is only the expression of thought that offers a handle to public control. Here lies the ultimate right. The "rights of man" as assembled under Liberalism were too many and too costless. But there is one right, which is at once a right and a duty—the right and the duty of thought to get into the open and work its way to power. For this is the meaning of human life. Hence this inner germination is the

incompressible atom, and its working outward the incompressible right. What happens to a man's property, whether it is collectivized or not, is important, but of secondary importance; it is important because of its bearing on this individual thought-bearing business, an individual must have the *means to differ!* But what happens to his voice, when it is the voice of his feeling and belief, that is of the last importance, both for him and for his state.

To the Fascist slogan, "Outside the State there is nothing," we must rejoin that "If so, the State is nothing": for outside the state is the source of the state itself. Man the breeder of idea and feeling, and of the state idea, is outside the state. Man whose thought comprehends other men, his groups, who spontaneously puts himself *in loco Dei* toward them, this imaginative and responsible inclusiveness is the thing in the psyche of the "political animal" which perennially gives life to political forms. If man, the responsible thinker, We-thinking rather than I-thinking, is everywhere in control, the fusion of thought is natural, unity is attainable, and the liberal spirit is in control whatever the form of the state.

Indeed, this element of liberty, the right to

generate ideas and get them worked into the social fabric, is the soul of the older Liberalism; and that soul is immortal. It requires immortality to finish its work, for this part of the Liberal program is chronically unfinished. We have been nearer a genuine freedom of speech and of conscience than we are now. How much safer is it in America to speak for communism than in Russia to speak against it? The professional defenders of our Constitution are ready to defend all of it except the liberty which gave it birth. There is no dismissing Liberalism wholesale while its most important battle is so far from won.

But here we approach our final topic: how can these two necessities be united? How can the strong and unified state be compatible with this incompressible individual life and liberty?

CHAPTER V

THE CO-AGENT STATE

WE have come to a new statement of an old dilemma. In all social groups at all times there is a certain tension between the purposes of the group which demand some common action, and the diverging ideas of its individual members. In political groups, the dilemma takes the form of a struggle between authority and liberty. The intensity of the struggle has varied a good deal, somewhat in proportion to the pretensions which public authority has set up; the state, as the largest territorial group, tends in its representatives to think of itself in absolute terms, and to put on the regalia of omniscience, omnipotence, and divine sanction, sometimes of actual divine presence. And since there is no human device which can maintain in isolation a successful representation of the Absolute, the struggle at this point has always begun by the revolt of the incompressible individual, and has ended by spreading authority throughout the social body. Democracy, following Rousseau, sets up the absoluteness of the "General Will"; and then proceeds to gnaw away at its

own sovereignty, until no sovereignty is discoverable anywhere. The task of destroying the human Absolute is too well done, and the old dilemma presents itself again: You must have a genuine political life; yet you cannot have it at the cost of stultifying or regimenting individuals. As long as the problem presents itself in this way, there can be no solution; there can be only temporary adjustments, as if two competing powers were trying to arrive at a working compromise which would get them over another short stretch of history.

The dictatorships to the east of us conceive the problem, in the main, in this way, and try to recover lost ground for social unity by taking something away from the presumptuous and incompetent individual as they see him, substituting collective thought and will for some stretches of his private thought and will. Democracy has set up—as Faguet puts it—“*le culte de l'incompétence . . . et l'horreur des responsabilités*”; and the way out is to return to the notion that the head shall do the thinking, and let the hands, feet, heart, stomach do what they were intended to do, and not pretend to govern.

Now we have agreed with the postulate that political life must march and must

therefore have unity. But we have put it in the form of a demand that the *commotive functions shall be better done*; a commotive function being one which brings all the members of the body into the current of the thinking, feeling, acting of the whole. It does not subtract from their mental participation in politics: it adds to it, at the same time that it strengthens the state.

Such partial breakdown as we now witness in our Liberal institutions has come in large part from the success of the original Liberal assumptions. It is due to an increase in the complexity of social arrangements and the intricate bearing of everything on everything else, which no head—not even the professor of political economy, not to speak of the common voter—successfully traces. The interests which interpenetrate as never before give rise to a multitude of new clashes which have out-run our powers of appraisal and therefore of settlement. It is as though a social life which had begun a century ago to be organized at the level of the oyster, had now taken on the complication of a fish: the nervous system of the oyster will not operate the physiology of the fish. The trouble is not that the foot is trying to function as the brain, but that a primitive nervous system has been trying to

function as a higher one. Political society is not an organism; its organism has to be built and rebuilt, as its success at one level produces the problems of a higher level.

Further, the community of today can no longer endure the same amount of division, dissent, obstruction, delay as was tolerable a century ago. For the more intricate organisms are the more vulnerable, and a slight impediment in the economic life may bring a city or a nation to the verge of disaster. The strike, for example, becomes on this account an increasingly formidable weapon. The demand for a working commotive function thus appears with a new imperativeness to our time. As an illustration, the Banking Act of March, 1933 (in no sense a party measure, since it was prepared in substance by the Hoover Administration), was as clearly beyond the Constitution as many of the more specific acts which followed; and yet its patent necessity has preserved it from criticism on that score. We recognize that the economic life must *go on*, or millions perish; and that political life, if necessary, must see that it goes on; and that to do this, it must have a going capacity of its own, a commotive power.

But we have also demanded, as our second necessity, that in this enhancement of the

central power of government the individual must not be mutilated, nor lessened. The easy solutions of reversion to "authority" are thus closed to us. Our problem is how to conceive a social order which can comply with both demands at once: how can we combine the strong state and the strong individual?

a. The Extrapolation of Will.

THE conception which we wish to offer will be made plainer if we first consider one property of all social groups, namely, that they normally extend the scope of the will of each member, carrying it out, as it were, beyond his own body.

Rousseau has asserted that the will cannot be "represented," i.e., that no one can will for another; and this is literally true. But there is such a thing as agreement between two wills, in respect to something which ought to be done. And it is possible for one will to make itself an agent, by an act of free decision, for carrying out a decision of another will. If I work for another man, for wages, the question hardly arises whether I agree with him: my undertaking is to "do his will" whether I approve or not. If I am a responsible agent, it becomes important that I should both understand and agree as well as

“do the will” of my principal. In carrying out his instructions, I have to make many a subordinate decision of my own. My will thus becomes an extension of his will. It is not “similar to” his will: it is an integral part of the identical act: it is a part of his will that I do what I do. He has not decided *what* I decide; but he has decided *that* I shall decide for him; hence in this respect my decisions are also his decisions. Any folly on my part is his folly, for he chose me; and any addition to my intelligence or skill, so far from taking from him, adds to his resources.

Now in some respects the social group is in a relation to its members like that of the responsible agent. It extends their wills. The more power it has, the more power they have; the more authority it has, the more liberty they have—liberty to do what they want to do. Liberty is not gained by limiting authority, but by adding to it.

In simple groups the principle is quite spontaneously used. The primitive governments set up in athletic teams (each of whose members is in exact agreement with every other in one respect, that “our team win”) are not distinguished by the forms of democracy: each one wishes the elimination of inner friction, the promptness of action, which

come from vesting autocracy in coach or captain; his power is theirs. The democracy is latent, for dissatisfaction with coach or captain may mean prompt deposition; he remains just so long as he is an actual extension of the individual will, no longer. The township organization of New England has among its usual functions the care or part of the care of local roads and schools. The authority of the town meeting is quickly responsive to the feelings of members: it does not produce perfect roads or schools, if there are any such things; but it produces such roads and schools as the citizens can afford. And it is clear that to each citizen who uses road or school, the more the total power of the town, the more his individual satisfaction. The authority of the town is his freedom; his freedom is in proportion to its authority.

In the more elaborate groups of state and nation, the same principle holds, though unanimity of will is less manifest, and the latent democracy of recall far less available. Where we can assume agreement, or approximate agreement, in our purposes—as that kidnapers be apprehended and punished, or that the financial or engineering problems subsidiary to public undertakings be solved—it is as obvious as in small groups that the strength of

the Federal Government is the strength of each individual. If criminals cannot be caught because the Federal arm is hampered in pursuit by the multiplication of local jurisdictions, every man in America is by so much less free. Some years ago, when a rise in the Colorado River threatened to flood the Saltonstall area, the Government having no engineers at call who were able to cope with the situation, was obliged in some humiliation to accept an offer from Mr. Harriman, to bring to its aid the engineering staff of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Our will would have been carried out better by a stronger state; we should have been freer men. Or again, to take a case not wholly supposititious, if the legal talent at the command of the Government at Washington were at any point inferior to the legal talent at the command of private corporations, and if justice in human affairs were unhappily a function of the ability of lawyers, we should all be deprived at that point of an essential part of our freedom.

Now these technical questions of law or engineering are certainly beyond the competence of the average citizen. It is this fact which leads to the view of Gentile, that the state must supply the individual with those thoughts which he cannot think for himself.

The difference between his analysis and ours lies precisely here: that in our view, *the thought of the state does not move into an empty head*. The citizen does not know how to apprehend the criminal; but he wills *that* the criminal be apprehended. He does not know how to solve the legal issue nor the engineering problem; but he is concerned *that* they be solved. It is this original stock of purpose which constitutes the governmental deed the work of a responsible agent of the citizen, so that its deeds are *ipso facto* his deeds, the extrapolation of his will.

The fact is concealed from us first by the immense scope of governmental action of which, as individuals, we have but the vaguest knowledge, and second by the necessity for dissenting from and criticizing so much of governmental activity. We are willing to strengthen governmental powers when they are used as we desire; but the likelihood that they will be used as we do not desire is so great that safety lies in curbing them—such is our common attitude. We are somewhat in the position of a man who had an estate which required ten servants to keep it in order; but he could not find ten men whom he trusted and as he could only keep a personal eye on

two, he compromised by hiring five. As a result, he fell into both evils; the estate went to ruin and the five ran it while it lasted for their own benefit, not his. There were open to him only two reasonable alternatives, either to abandon the estate as too much for him, or to hire eleven men, one of whom he could trust to take charge of the rest. Now the first alternative is not open to us; we cannot abandon the business of government even though it is too much for us: it must be carried on. And there is no wisdom in trying to do it on insufficient powers. The lesson of corrupt, foolish or runaway governments is not to hamstring all government, but to put more life into the control of a government fully equipped. This is the precise opposite of the Fascist policy, which is to abolish the mechanism of control, and so make the citizenry the tail of the state kite, with an ever deepening absurdity in the pretense that the will of the state originates in the will of the people!

Dissent is not contradictory to unanimity on a deeper level. Nine boys may be in complete agreement in the will to play ball, and in complete disagreement as to who shall be pitcher. The unanimous will to play ball is helpless unless some way of settling the pitcher question can be found: this is the es-

sence of the political art. But note that the settlement does not imply that agreement has been reached: it may imply rotation or experiment or bargain or resort to lottery—it implies in any case the partial agreement to act in suspension of the minor question while the major will to play ball is satisfied. In the life of all states, even the worst, there is to be found a similar underlying unanimity. Each citizen wills the existence of this political community (anarchists not excepted); with this, each wills that the state enforce its own existence and suppress rebellion; each wills that the state use such wisdom as it can muster in the business of government; and each wills that the state, in view of the limit of that wisdom, shall regard its work as subject to review and criticism by the consumers of government, ourselves. It is this last condition, that the laws and decrees of the state shall be regarded as experimental, and thus as addressed to our judgment, which alone justifies us in falling in unanimously with an experiment in which we may not agree, and which alone keeps alive the arterial bond between the citizen's will *that* the experiment go on, and the particular *what* supplied by the special talent of his agent, the government. If he, as eater of the pudding, is later to be

consulted by the cook, his interest in the eating will be not merely æsthetic, but also analytical; he may be able to instruct the cook in what way the next pudding should vary from the present one.

b. The Co-agent State.

Our analysis has attempted to show how, in some cases, the strength of the state may be the strength of the individual, not alone when he assents to the particular deeds of the state, but also when he dissents. The co-agent state is the state for which this coincidence, now occasionally realized, is the normal state of things. The co-agent state is based on the unanimous action of free individuals.

That there is a common Reason among men, whose expression in legislation makes political life possible, has been a favorite theme of political philosophy. Rousseau made clear that beyond the general Reason there may also be a "General Will." But this universal Will, like the universal Reason, was conceived as a generality, an idea, best expressed in legislation. Contemporary thought, impressed by the particular and historic nature of the political enterprise has been disposed to dismiss these universal notions as merely ideal and semimythical, and to con-

sider the state enterprise as one of the flexible and current adjustment of interests. But this realistic bent, in the effort to do justice to actualities, weakly and unnecessarily lets go the element of significance and hope in political life, the universal, which alone brings men together. It is not necessary to choose between the universal and the particular, the ideal and the real: every actual deed is a union of both. The co-agent state is the state whose primary function is the commotive function issuing in action, which is at once particular, history-making action, and unanimous action, an extension of every citizen's will.

Elements of agreement always tend to sink into subconsciousness, since the activities of life have to be concerned with the settlement of differences. The unanimities of thought and will which underlie the state are usually subconscious: only a public emergency brings to the surface the latent assent and community of purpose, in the feeling we call patriotism. The *laissez faire* state prefers that its silent mental tie should remain beneath the threshold. And since men generally are more ready to risk their lives for an endangered state than to part with their money for the ordinary activities of state life, politi-

cal prudence cultivates the "indirect tax" in which the citizen is unaware of his contribution to public expense, and so to public need. Hereby we subtly agree with and encourage the philosophical anarchist who conceives the ideal condition of men as one in which there should be no state at all. In these ways the emotional basis of all vigorous state life is renounced. For emotion can only exist when there is a consciousness of what we are doing, and for what end.

The co-agent state rejects as false shame all this political prudery, demands full political self-consciousness, assumes from the first that the state has something more and better to do than to exist; and in this something-to-do, consciously participated in by its citizens, it sees the ground work for a new emotion. The traditional conceptions of state action were merely modified forms of the will to exist; activities tending toward state aggrandizement, whether by way of war or of economic extension, simply magnify existence. And when the state has nothing to do but to grow big, its citizens will naturally follow suit. But the chief changes to be made in the world are qualitative. The idea of a just community is not a Platonic idea—it has its

special agenda for every situation. There is also an international society to be built; one in which the simpler ideas of a personal justice based on equality are replaced by fitter conceptions based on shifting inequalities, on racial possibilities and local functions, on changes of status, problems which our lazier Liberal reasonings have not scratched the surface of. Nationalism must change its meaning. As the self-glorification of each state, at whatever expense to the rest, Nationalism is the great political disease of our day. As the local organization and trying-out of ideas having world-wide validity, it may well be the next stage of political advance.

William James desired the "moral equivalent of war" for individual development. We need as well the commotive equivalent of war for the health of states. The co-agent state has this equivalent, and builds it into its program. And when the state has something to do, the meaning of the whole is transmitted to the parts: the citizen has something to live for, even after he has "succeeded."

For not only does he participate in the public program; but in the co-agent state he may be the source of elements in that program. There is no thought in the world except

individual thought; and state action normally arises as a continuance of private action and experiment. Let me illustrate.

William R. George was an "average citizen" who had a shop—an album shop, I think it was—in New York during the time when Theodore Roosevelt was police commissioner. Beside his interest in trade, Mr. George had a collateral interest in boys which induced him to answer a request of Roosevelt for volunteer auxiliary police. In this capacity Mr. George learned something of the needs of the boys of his precinct. He worked out the idea of a summer colony on a farm near Ithaca, New York; and this became in time the "George Junior Republic." This significant experiment in correction and education becomes known through the country; other Junior Republics are established in other states. Some of its ideas find their way into reformatories and prisons, both in this country and abroad. The private experiment becomes a public experiment; the state deed grows immediately out of the deed of one individual.

We have spoken of Y. C. J. Yen's experiment in education in China. The Nanking Government has been watching this experi-

ment since the close of the war and its introduction in the city of Chang Sha. It is prepared to send to Ting Hsien, the county in which the work of the "Mass Education Movement" is now concentrated, groups of teachers to study Dr. Yen's methods and carry them throughout China. "Jimmy" Yen seeks delay on the score that he has not yet perfected his methods. But there are numerous adaptations of his ideas in various parts of the school system of China. Here again, the idea of the individual grows naturally into the deed of the state.

Originating in this way, the deeds of the state carry a national quality which has nothing to do with chauvinism; it is simply that the idea bears traces of the soil from which it springs, adds to the total meaning of that region, and achieves a commotive force which no merely general idea could have. Consider the work of Gandhi in India, wholly apart from his efforts for Indian autonomy. This withered and weazened figure of a man, approaching seventy, is occupied in a campaign for the improvement of the status of the "untouchables" which involves a reinterpretation of the theory of caste. Caste was originally an occupational division conjoined with a division of families, for occupations or

occupational groups were hereditary. To this in the course of time have been added two additional demarcations, the religious and the social; as if—to exaggerate the matter—persons of different family and occupation ought not to worship in the same temple, nor eat at the same table. Gandhi sets himself not to abolish caste, but to rid the institution of these last two divisions, which are distortions of the original idea: he is demanding, in particular, that the untouchables be admitted to temples with their fellow Hindus, and that social intercourse with them be no longer taboo. Now Western reformers and missionaries in India have long been critics of the institution of caste, but with little effect. They have seldom perceived its legitimate and useful side, but have favored its wholesale abandonment. Gandhi makes the needed distinctions, and appeals to the conscience of the Hindu as to his fellow religionists, and in a few years accomplishes more than a hundred and fifty years of foreign advice and criticism have accomplished. What Gandhi judges may far more readily become what “We,” the people of India, judge, than what you or I may recommend. The mind and conscience of the individual naturally become the mind and conscience first of all of his own community,

and so, in time, of his state as a national entity having its own peculiar genius and historic mission. Conceived in this way, the spirit of nationalism may become an asset rather than a liability to the international order.

These illustrations indicate another respect in which the co-agent state differs in conception from our usual idea of democracy. In democracy, the citizens, as equals, are all supposed to be equally interested in all phases of the state; they consider and vote upon the same proposals. In the co-agent state, the contribution of the individual is chiefly along the line of his own special interest and capacity. Hence the relation of the free individual to a democratic state is the relatively passive relation of "consent," one "consents" to what other people have proposed; in the co-agent state, he is the initiator in some point of what the community does—the state picks up and prolongs the line of his own activity.

Thus the co-agent state recognizes the natural destiny of the idea to find its way to public power, through an intermediate struggle in which—normally speaking—the fittest proposals are the survivors, and the losers, as

critics and contestants, having sharpened and corrected the idea that wins, have also shaped the deed of the state, and can join in the experiment which tries its validity.

c. What Has the State To Do?

THE *laissez faire* state did not really restrict itself to police functions and defense. It admitted certain actions which it felt to be naturally public deeds, such as the coining of money, establishment of weights and measures, determination of tariffs, care of paupers and dependents, keeping of public records, building of roads, maintaining postal service, public education, public parks, public health. But why must these miscellaneous activities creep in as exceptions to the general rule of least government? The principle, whatever it is, which justifies their presence on the list of governmental functions deserves to be brought into evidence: they are all activities which, instead of subtracting from individual action, tend either to define it or to promote it, just as the activity which marks out the course of a race and fixes the line of beginning to end, instead of replacing the work of the runners, is required to define it. This principle is capable of extension. There are three fields in particular in which the co-agent state has some-

thing to do, the field of international relations, the field of economics and the field of common life. Let us glance briefly at these.

The international field is one in which the state most naturally acts "as a whole," because, by definition, the units of behavior are the nation states. It is the field of hostilities, rivalries, wars, which as we have noted most easily touch the commotive impulses of communities; it is also the field of occasional co-operation, and of attempts to set up a community of states. Our imagination is slow in developing the commotive possibilities in this latter direction. Mr. H. G. Wells in a rapid visit to this country some twenty years ago remarked that as a people we had a destiny but no mission; we were full of our destiny to grow great, but empty of ideas as to what that greatness should mean to the world at large.

The remark is not wholly just. This country has to some extent identified its destiny and its mission; inasmuch as it has felt that it could do no better for the world at large than give an example of a successful democracy on a large scale. It has had much to do in giving life and order to its vast domain; it has been right in considering this its first

business; and from the first it has not been devoid of a "decent respect for the opinions of mankind"—it has been conscious of making a responsible demonstration of liberty, and has, in fact, provided ample material for political thought in Europe. But Wells is in substance right: the time has come when attention exclusively to our own business ceases to be enough, even for the good of that business.

The British interpretation of national mission is not quite to our taste. Yet there is an ingredient in "imperialism" which may be extracted and used with advantage in another key. A pre-war commentator, speaking of this imperial policy, said that with the motive of material advantage was mingled a profound impulse "to spread the British type of mind." It wants to spread the English language and literature, as a channel for the English ways of looking at things; not because they are English, but because in the nature of the case, the English suspect that they are the best ways, otherwise they would not follow them themselves! There is a missionary impulse here which, however narrow, is certainly not malicious in intent nor purely egoistic. The British civil service officer was entirely sincere who said to me in 1931 that

“Religious missions are all very well in their way; but the one truly effective missionary force in the world is the British Empire. Missions polish up individuals here and there, but the Empire civilizes whole peoples.” The French have the same feeling in regard to the French language and culture, as one can see in the rhapsodies of Maurice Barrès over the possibilities of French influence in the Near East. To the American mind the element of benevolence in imperial policies is conveyed to its beneficiaries at too high a cost and with too much compulsion, so that we marvel that it works at all—as it does. But we dismiss too easily this respectable element and the responsibility that goes with it under the sham that we are not our brother’s keeper, and that we were admonished by George Washington not to become entangled! We *are* entangled in world affairs, every international conference is dealing with American interests; and we present to the world the figure of a great nation preoccupied with the technique of retreating from the facts, when we might present the figure of a great nation having a positive contribution to make.

We are like the farmer who received a note from a neighbor, asking him to come and discuss damage which had been done to the

neighbor's crops by the farmer's cows. The farmer refused to come, on the ground that last year he had carefully repaired his fence, and it was therefore impossible that his cows should have strayed abroad. His reasoning was admirable, but the cows had disregarded it, and the entanglement-avoiding farmer had to work out in court what he might have worked out in conversation. Conversation has always the advantage that in dealing with pending problems before they grow too big, it also offers occasion for conveying one's whole state of mind. If one has a mission, conversation on any pretext is to be welcomed rather than avoided.

We are not a pure cipher in this field. One of the best things we do is our participation in the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome. Our recent representative, Mr. Henry Taylor, knows as few men know to what extent the agriculture of the world is a common concern of every people. When about one third of the human race are living on the soil of India and China alone, one can roughly see how great an economic stake, to put it on the most material footing, we have in the welfare of that rural population. There is a solidarity in the agricultural programs and problems of the world which makes this a fit

subject for coöperative discussion and planning. This, and many like concerns, may properly find their place in the agenda of the co-agent state, and engage the general interest of its citizens.

d. The Field of Economics.

WE have accepted a certain amount of intrusion of government in the affairs of business, on the principle above stated—that of defining the base from which individual activity starts. The value of currency is in this position, likewise measures and customs duties. In addition, we have learned by experience that the institution of credit is not self-managing, and a degree of “regulation” is necessary that business men may know where they stand. Any further touch upon the vast system of producing and distributing has to steer between Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand, the system itself is not self-righting, so that a let-alone policy becomes suicidal. On the other hand, any interference invites another, until the government finds itself involved in attempt to know the whole of Business, which is more than Business does; and this means an extended system of officialdom whose bulk renders it unintelligent and unable to march except by dictation

from the center. Nothing is worse in government, especially the government of business, than a complex bureaucracy; we haven't the man power to run American business that way.

The co-agent state is bound to discover a course of action which will enhance rather than diminish individual initiative. If we follow our clue of defining the ground from which enterprise starts, we can distinguish a few guiding principles in this difficult terrain.

The touch of government is needed where the rules of competition tend to give the advantage to the meanest competitor. Business itself knows best what constitutes fair and unfair competition; but Business is seldom in a position to administer a set of fair rules. We were saying that honesty and dishonesty are not the monopoly of any class or occupation: the honest and the dishonest are distributed throughout the social order. But between the honest men and crooks, there are many men, perhaps a majority in business, who are less honest than they would honestly like to be! They feel that they are caught in a system of habitual practices which puts them to a bad choice between curly dealings and business failure. It is these men whom an active state can particularly help; for it can create

the conditions *under which honesty is not self-destructive*. It can, for example, in consultation with business men, define codes of dealing with labor which business men would prefer to follow and would follow if their meaner competitors were compelled to follow suit. No state can prevent the stricter conscience from being at a business disadvantage, and if it could, there would be little conscience in it: but it can prevent such a conscience from being an automatic defeat. By accepting issues as they arise, establishing uniform practices, and aiding business to effect local agreements which are beyond governmental reach, it can meet reform half way and develop by degrees the sense of a professional ethic within the business community.

The touch of government is needed, again, where the profit motive fails to make industry go. Private industry is not tuned to operate at a loss over long periods of time: to its credit it often does so operate for extended intervals. We may remember to the honor of American business that during the worst of the depression forty million men were retained in employment, which is at least as important a fact as that twelve million were out of work. (Further, any system which is rendered insensitive to the fact that it is

operating at a loss, whether by subsidies or by too close relation to the taxing power, is in dubious relation to public welfare.) But there are deadlocks into which frightened individual producers fall, when each insists that the other shall first risk his economic neck by action. Here government can enter as a stabilizing and insuring factor. So far from replacing individual initiative, it may promote that initiative by depriving it of a quixotic riskiness when the morale of business is shaken.

It can do this, however, only by doing something more: it must maintain a constant control of the total relation between consumption and production. Nothing is more blind than a general and indiscriminate prod-ding of Industry no matter what Industry happens to be making! Governments have been known to issue a general exhortation to employers to take on more employees, whether the employers were engaged in turning out motor cars, high heels, or penny dreadfuls. Economic processes constitute a single and healthful organism only when the totality of persons in a community who have a right to consume determine what is produced. They can never constitute an organism when it is

the producers who determine what is produced, and who in doing so also determine who is to consume, since no one can consume who has not taken part in production. And since there is no way at present for discovering rightful-consumers' demand, as distinguished from the conjectural demand of consumers-who-can-pay, which every business tries to guess at, the original spring of the economic system is unknown and unprotected. Society has no more important business than to identify rightful demand and turn it into actual demand.

Marx supposed that the economic problem would be solved by a social control of distribution which would begin with the abolition of production for profit. This does not reach the core of the trouble. It is true that distribution cannot be left to the contest of pressures among factors in production in which one factor, capital, has all the cards. But it is not true that you can begin with production, and solve your economic problem by a just scheme of distribution among the existing factors of production; it is the people who are not factors of production who make the difficulty. It is always possible on such a plan to leave out millions of rightful consumers: the unemployed can exist in a Marxian scheme as

well as in any other, and they do exist in Russia today. You must begin with your population as potential (and in general rightful) consumer; and require production to carry the load of that rightful demand as its first charge. Capitalistic industry cannot make this adjustment, it has no organ to assemble the data, much less to make the plan. If then it is to retain its capitalistic character—as I believe it should—it must coöperate in setting up, with the aid of government, new organs for transmitting demand.

As we have already pointed out, the proposal that the state take over the direction of capital and industry is due to a faulty analysis. Why should the state supplant producers when the problem of production has been so nearly solved? Why should it replace employers by politicians, any more than it should replace employees by politicians? But the state has something to do with production: that is, to drive into economic practice the truth that there is little or no capital whose use is not “affected by a public interest.” It must steadily represent the public interest in the way capital is used. If, for example, an employer is using child labor, it would be proper for government to inquire

whether such use of child labor—wholly apart from the question of unfair competition—is or is not in the public interest. Indeed, this is one of the most ancient functions of government; for law itself might be described as a reminder to the individual of the points at which his private activity affects the interests of others, and so touches public concern.

Let me illustrate this matter by a theme that has been much in our minds of late. During the discussion of the Wheeler-Rayburn bill, many of us have been receiving literature by the pound, put out by holding companies whose existence was threatened by that bill. Most of these bits of literature were composed upon the same plot, which we might analyze as follows: Canto 1: The holding companies have performed a useful service; they have been necessary to the development of a mighty industry; they have created chains in which strong units have upheld weak ones, and the use of power has been more widely spread, etc. Canto 2: There have been certain abuses in this development. Canto 3: Those abuses do not argue for the destruction of the holding company, but for its regulation. Who among the readers of this gripping saga has not looked, and looked in vain, for Canto 4? The contents of that Canto are required by

every canon of reason and fine art by what has gone before. It should say: We propose to inaugurate, on our own initiative, such and such remedies for the above-mentioned abuses, and in these specified places would welcome the aid of governmental control. There are of course prudential reasons for the omission of the last Canto; and very likely it should be written by some other hand. But this furnishes a good instance of our growing sense of the way in which the use of capital finds itself, perhaps to its own surprise, touching on public interests; and how this fact ought to lead to a mutually useful coöperation with a co-agent state, not aiming to destroy the work of the individual initiator, but to fulfill it.

e. The Sphere of Conscience.

THE co-agent state will deal more hardily with conscience than the Liberal state felt justified in doing. For while conscience is the peculiar sphere of individual liberty, it is also the sphere of deepest public concern. The central fallacy of Kant's theory of law lies in the supposition that the state has nothing to do with motives and is concerned only with external behavior. The truth is that no organization is so dependent on the *morale* of its citizenry as the state: the state can make no

laws effective which its members are not for the most part disposed to obey; if its citizens become unwilling to fight for any cause whatever, it cannot take adequate measures even for its own defense. The state has every stake in the different shades of sincerity and good will, in the distinction between the conscientious objector and the malingerer, in the distinction between the self-interested agitator and the prophet of a new order, in the distinction between the loafer who prefers to be on the public dole and the man of pride who is driven to it as a last resort. In all these and a hundred other issues, the critical difference lies in the inaccessible regions of private conscience; and the state is compelled to act on the principle that conscience tends to a certain universality. The man who kills is presumably wrong at heart; though even here the state will carefully weigh evidence to the contrary. The common law is built upon a prevalent state of conscience in the community; and because of this tendency to ethical agreement among men, especially among men of a like origin, federal laws touching moral issues, such as the punishment of crime, standards of family life, divorce, can take more decisive lines than laws touching local interests and habits. And the state is every-

where justified in demanding that the so-called rights of men shall be understood to be conditional on good will; so that without this good will all rights cease to exist.

The criterion of good will is in general the disposition of the individual to submit to what is called discipline, the course of training and restraint necessary to reach a due standard of performance. The medical practitioner who refuses the years of preliminary study has no "natural right" to practice; nor is there any other "natural right" which can be exercised in defiance of the ordinary pains-to-become-competent. The state has been compelled to deal with this inner sincerity in the difficult case of religious liberty. No physical line can be drawn between true and false religion. But just because the state seeks liberty for true religion (if it does), it is bound to try to eliminate the swarming frauds in this field: it may attempt no positive approval of any cult but it passes a swift negative judgment where public order, decency, good morals are transgressed. It runs the risk of destroying some of the real prophets; but it is more careful than of old to give every man a hearing, and after this, it must risk its own judgment: it cannot do otherwise. It will extend this principle to all the "rights of man."

They are genuine rights, not expediencies: but the state will have to take the line that the genuine right belongs to the genuine good will and to nothing else; and it will clamp down with a new severity on specious claims to make way for those that are genuine.

The older Liberalism lacked the sense of paradox. It could not see the half truth in the proposal that liberty has to come by way of restraint, peace by way of pugnacity, sympathy by an honest hardness, the individual by way of a preordained harmony. Its positive faith in human nature was just; but it was "once-born," it was unaware of moral costs.

For example, it was right in standing for freedom of the expression of thought, and we have joined in that demand. But it was not careful to add that freedom to express thought is *for thinkers*. Disgust with Liberalism is probably due more to this trait than any other, that it has called for liberty of thought for nonthinkers. Its institutions have sagged because they have assumed that the natural man thinks—voters, legislators, administrators, lawyers—people who perhaps ought to think, but who in fact imitate, absorb, pretend, rationalize, adhere, far more

than they think. Millions of communicants of the old Russian Church acquiesce in the new anti-God regime with little protest and less martyrdom: they fancied they were believers; they were only adherents. The lash of political necessity, obliging them to abandon that mockery of thought may be good medicine for their sincerity: it is possible that Russia may now do some real thinking on the subject of religion. The traditional pledge of the thinker's sincerity—that he has at least given the schools a chance at him—tends in our own day, through the prevalence of another Liberal sentiment, the right of every man to a schooling, to become a travesty of discipline. Our “intelligent and educated classes” do some thinking; but there is much more of pure cerebral wave-motion which begets facility of language apart from ideas. Idea bearing should be as solemn a business as child bearing; and we have turned it into a public promiscuity in which every Hornblower, Influential Editor, National Clown mingles his say with that of Ambitious Priests and Leading Ladies to turn the General Will. What vast damage would be done to our social life if some stern political resolve were to shut all this vain conceit of thought under scuttle doors until it were ready to make a danger-

ous stand for something it had soberly come to think? Probably not much. Nevertheless, the parentage of a valid idea is so far a mystery, frequently arriving in a gay twinkle of intuition, or on the surface of an irresponsible wish-wash of idle ideation, that no state can administer its subtler conditions with economy or safety. The state has every right to quell the public buffoon, the mischief-breeder or salacity-monger if it can identify him. But its best hope is to supply standards to the hearers, and allow them to deal with the "freedom of expression" by a corresponding "freedom not to listen."

The truth is that we live under the stress of two perils, and not of one only. To the hideous perils and absurdities of the Censorship, we must join the equally hideous perils, hypocrisies and humbugs of No-censorship. And so for all the items of the Liberal program. In every point, men must be free; and in every point they must be subject to a sobering objective judgment which checks that freedom. The new state must do two things where the Liberal state attempted but one. It must restrict liberty for the sake of liberty.

But this is the relieving point in its task: that when the state has something to do, the

meaning of the whole, transmitted to the parts, tends to enliven the conscience as well as the interest of the individual citizen. He becomes willing to submit to a discipline which otherwise he would find irksome, more than this, *he wants it!* Training for public life becomes a serious matter; it is not inconceivable that even in America young men in order to qualify for public service might undergo severe mental gymnastic, including the study of philosophy, such as makes membership in "The Party" the primary social distinction in Russia! Young Russians undergo freely the rigors of training for admission to The Party as other young men accept gladly the discipline of the Jesuit Order; because they believe that these rigors are not arbitrary, but belong to the man-making business. It is the strong state which alone can call out the strong individual; and conversely, the strong individual, like the good sailor who prefers a taut ship to a lax one, thrives best in the state which maintains the integrity of its requirements for office, for the suffrage, for the enjoyment of the ordinary "rights of man and of the citizen."

f. Securities for Future Liberty.

IF then the state ought to take a stronger

line in matters touching the conscience of the community, if all rights have their conditions, and the state is to be the judge as to when these conditions are complied with, what is to save our normal liberty from the imperfect wisdom of politics? The answer is that there can be no security for liberty at any time under any regime except in the reality of individual conscience, and that it is the first business of the co-agent state to develop and equip that very conscience of its members which may reject and call for revision of the state's efforts at an inward justice.

In this point the co-agent state takes the precisely opposite path from that taken by current dictatorships. It provides sedulously for an honest and competent opposition. In the teaching of children it does not avoid "indoctrination" in the sense of a positive recommendation of tradition. If there is a prevalent religious creed, a political background defining a national spirit, a group of ethical prejudices expressing the national character, it is the birthright of children to be given these, with a precise and scrupulous regard for truth. To refuse him these elements of the group mind on the specious plea that the child must not be biased is a vicious travesty of the liberal spirit: it is like leaving him to

starve until he can choose and cook his own food lest he be biased in behalf of the national dishes. Liberty is a positive thing and demands tools to work with and food to grow on, a mental capital of working beliefs to begin life with. Minds cannot grow in a vacuum, and the education that prefers the vacuum because it is "free" is both false and cruel. But it is only an honest indoctrination that indoctrinates, that is, a handing on of the best we ourselves can see, not as finality but as our best judgment. Then with the opening of adolescence, when the child begins to reflect on his inheritance, seeing it as one view among various possible views, the education which has a care for individual liberty will begin to supply that mind with those instruments of self-criticism which we call logic and philosophy. Having given him a feeling for its own religious outlook, it then opens to him the history of religion; having suggested to him an ethical code, it initiates him into ethical discussion and the history of culture; having shown him the traditional bases of the American Republic, it leads him into political history, and the philosophy of political problems. It "takes him up into a large place" from which its own judgments appear as one among many ways of thinking, and there

leaves him to his individual conclusions, submitting itself to his approval or disapproval. The state that continues into mature years the process of indoctrination as the Soviet state attempts to confine the philosophical education of "The Party" to the variants of Marxism, shows a fear of truth, and begins to deprive itself of those individual resources of thought and conscience which are the life of the state.

There is a further guarantee of liberty which the state can neither provide nor take away, but which lies in the nature of individual conscience itself. It arises from the fact that conscience, as the most private of private matters, is rooted not only outside the individual, but also outside the community and the state. The individual cannot at his own will alter the verdict of his own conscience—its judgment comes from the nature of things, not from his whim or choice: he must be free to set his conscience against community and state, just because he is *not free* to manipulate it nor to disregard it. It is no more his purely personal affair than truth is the personal affair of the scientist; what his eyes show him, that he must report, whether it pleases himself or his time or his government.

It is rumored that the present German regime has gone deep into this question, and has decided against the independent character of truth. Dr. Bernhard Rust, Minister of Science and Education, is quoted as saying that "the old idea of science based on the sovereign right of abstract intellectual activity has gone forever . . . (science must be) an organ of a nation's living strength." It has always been awkward for party governments to have scientists looking with a fresh eye at social facts, still worse at historical facts, anthropological facts, psychological facts. Scientists, for their part, have not always been able to distinguish fact from interpretation, or to keep a sly antigovernment virus out of the "objective report" of their studies. Especially in mental and social science, the pretense of pure objectivity may be a hiding place for prejudice; so that the desire of socialists to write a "class conscious psychology" is not so absurd as a "class conscious physics or mathematics" might be. Truth is not served, in a naughty world, by deifying the scientist any more than by deifying the state.

Nevertheless, science and philosophy are self-criticizing activities; they catch themselves at their own deviations, and carefully

allow for the personal equation. The pursuit of truth is on the whole as clean a thing as we mortals do. And our defects in this pursuit, known to ourselves, reveal the inflexibility of principle by which conscience seeks to attach itself to the nature of the universe, not to the changing traits of individuals or of society. The deepest of the lasting elements of individualism is that inner bond to the ultimate object which has to say with a great German soul, "Here I stand: I can do no other, God help me." With a leaven of such individuals, whose individuality is not derived from nor alterable by politics, the fortunes of liberty, however perplexed, are in their outcome secure.

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